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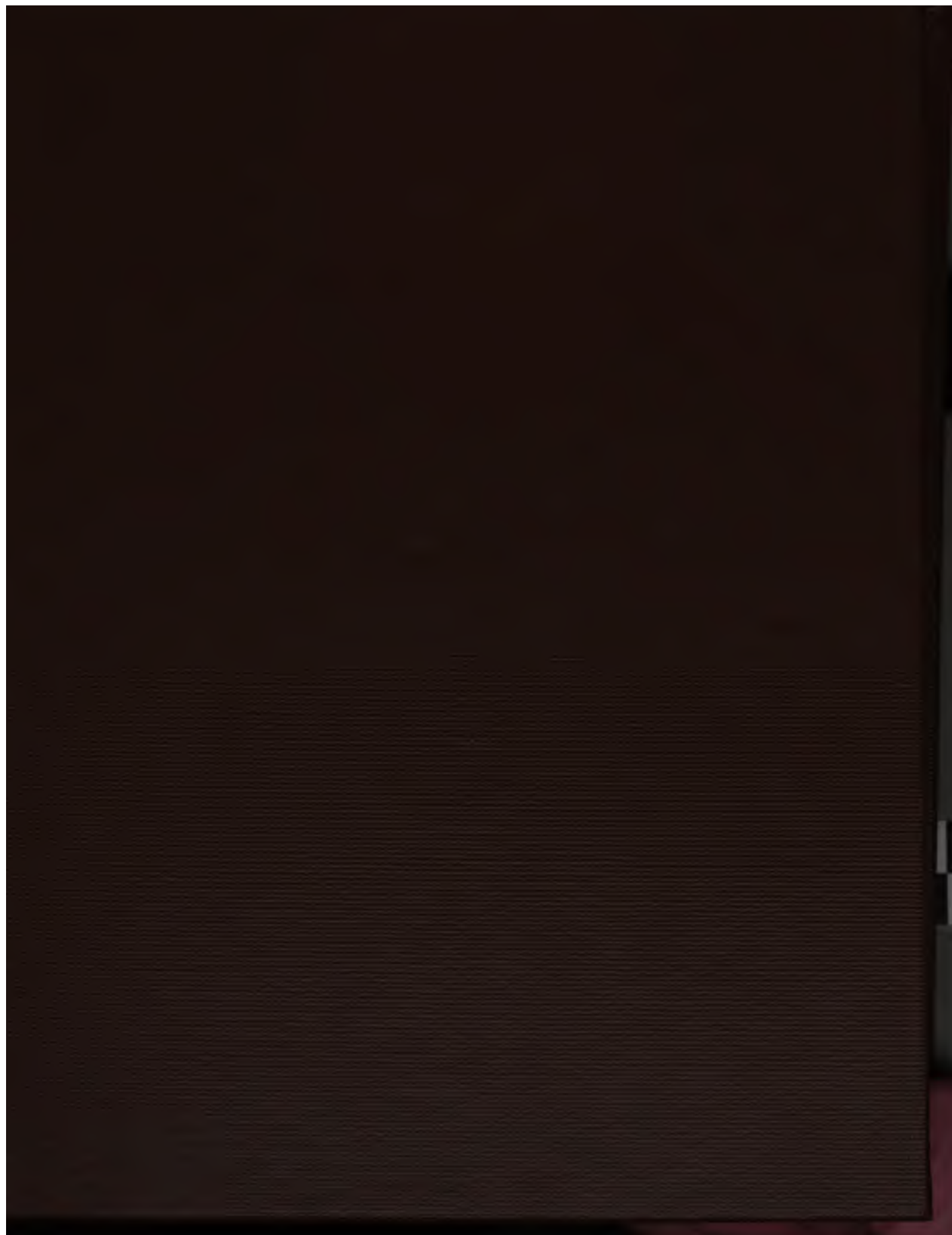
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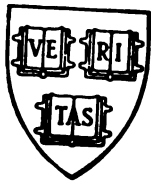
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A HISTORY
OF THE
House of Percy



Henry, 9th Earl of Northumberland.

A HISTORY
OF THE
House of Percy

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES DOWN TO
THE PRESENT CENTURY

BY
GERALD BRENAN

EDITED BY
W. A. LINDSAY, Esq., K.C., M.A.
(WINDSOR HERALD)

IN TWO VOLUMES

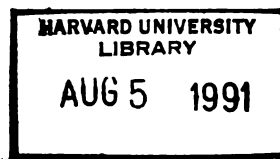
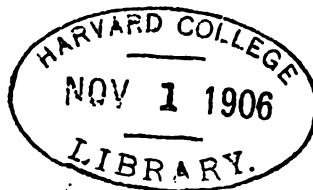
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THE HOUSE OF PERCY

VOLUME II

I

THE character of Henry, eighth Earl of Northumberland, offers a strange contrast to that of the ill-fated brother whom he succeeded. Earl Thomas had been loyal and warm-hearted to a fault—a brave and honourable gentleman, but scantily endowed with either resolution or foresight. Earl Henry, on the other hand, was a man of strong will, keen intellect and far-reaching ambition—untroubled by conscientious scruples when striving to gain an end—harsh, selfish, and unsympathetic. Thomas Percy made friends wherever he went, even in the enemy's camp: it is doubtful whether Henry ever experienced an honest friendship in his life. Burghley, indeed, regarded the eighth Earl with favour; but this may be set down partly to the alliance between their families, and partly to the fact that the minister recognised in Henry a nature somewhat akin to his own.

Henry Percy was a mere stripling when he began to make his mark as a skilful and courageous leader upon the Border-side. Born about the year 1532 at Newburn Manor, he was made Governor of Tynemouth Castle by Queen Mary while still in his minority. We have seen him fighting by his brother's side in most of the Scottish raids and conflicts of the period. In 1554 he was returned as member of parliament for Morpeth; and 1557 saw him knighted and placed next in remainder to the new earldom conferred by Mary upon Sir Thomas. Up to this time he had professed the Catholic religion; but no

sooner did Elizabeth ascend the throne, than he cast aside his youthful faith like a cloak that had served his turn, and conformed (outwardly at least) to the new tenets. The Queen, by way of rewarding his change of creed, gave him command of a recently mustered body of light horse equipped "*like Black Harness of Almaine, otherwise called the Swart Rutters*" (Schwartzze Ritter) "*and armed with corseletts and two dagges apiece.*"¹ These Percy led into Scotland against the French auxiliary forces under D'Oyzelle, which were strongly posted at Dunbar, Leith, and other places. The campaign was a most successful one for the Black Horse and their commander. Dunbar fell before their attack, and Leith soon followed its example. "*I thinke you have here ore now,*" wrote Maitland to Cecil from the camp before the latter town, on April 28, 1560, "*of the exploits done at Dunbarre by Sir Henry Percy, the Lord Ruthven, and the Lord of Grange, whereat at leash fifty were taken and Kyllled; and two capteynes, one of Horsemen and one of Footmen, taken. Yesternight was a nombre of Frenchmen deffact in the very dytches of this toun and all cut to pieces.*"² For his conduct upon this occasion Percy won the highest praise. The Queen thanked him warmly in a letter to the Warden, Lord Grey, on April 14; and subsequently invited him to a personal interview, in the course of which he was induced to give his own account of the recent Scottish wars.³ Moreover the French commander, D'Oyzelle, asked permission to surrender his sword to Sir Henry Percy rather than to Grey, since the latter had acquired a sinister reputation for his treatment of prisoners. But these Border frays exercised an evil influence upon those who took part in them; and it is not long before we find Percy reputed fully as harsh to the captured French and Scots as Grey had been. During March 1565 Moray wrote to Cecil and Leicester, asking them to interfere in the case of "*the Master of Mareschall,*"⁴ then held in

¹ *Orig. State Papers*; Queen Elizabeth to Duke of Norfolk, December 25, 1559.

² *State Papers*; Maitland to Cecil.

³ *Orig. State Papers* (Scotland), Record Office.

⁴ Lord Keith, son of the Earl Marischal.

durance by Sir Henry Percy, "*by quhome, as we ar informit, he is in sic rigorous maneir handilyt as we esteyme not fytt nor convenient for ye present tyme of peace.*"¹ Even the English Commissioners at Edinburgh, complained of Percy's cruelty towards the Scots. But severity to her enemies was by no means displeasing to Elizabeth; and, so far from reprimanding Sir Henry, she appointed him her agent to treat with the heads of the Scottish Congregationers, with a view to a Protestant alliance between England and Scotland.² Already, shortly after the Queen's succession, he had served as one of the commission for administering the oath of allegiance and conformity exacted from all clergymen³; so that, for a young man bred to the profession of arms, he must have acquired an unusual amount of theological learning. In the various letters⁴ which he wrote to John Knox and William Kirkcaldy of Grange he shows great skill in fencing with delicate questions, and a diplomacy far beyond his years. It would be unfair to believe that the ardour which he displayed in the cause of Protestantism between 1558 and 1571 was wholly a pretence, and assumed merely for interested motives; yet the alacrity with which he returned to his former faith when he found further prospects of advancement barred, leads one to suspect the sincerity of his Puritan professions. If he wore a mask, however, he wore it discreetly and greatly to his own advantage.

Sir Henry Percy soon found the revenues of a younger brother far too slender for one who (on account of the Earl of Northumberland's Romanist views, and consequent retirement from public life) had become the practical representative of the family. He felt that the Queen should substantially reward one who had abandoned his paternal religion "for

Sir Henry
makes his
own match,
and another.

¹ *Orig. State Papers* (Scotland), vol. iv. No. 3.

² Camden; *Annales*, vol. i. *State Papers* (Scotland).

³ *Fœdera*, xv. 611-12.

⁴ The original MSS. of the correspondence are preserved in the Record Office (*Scot. Series, State Papers, 1509-1603, vol. v.*).

her sake," and this, too, in a part of England where such examples were rare. Nor had he any hesitation in putting forward his claims. Cecil had met him during his visit to the Queen, and had at once taken a fancy to this shrewd, resourceful young soldier. The fancy had grown into a positive liking after Percy had displayed his *finesse* in dealing with Knox and the Scottish Calvinists; and the ambitious Governor of Tynemouth was encouraged to correspond frequently with her Majesty's chief minister. To Cecil, therefore, Sir Henry wrote on June 28, 1560, complaining of the inadequacy of his means, and boldly hinting that something might be done to enable him to cut a better figure upon the Border. It was hard that Popish recusants like Northumberland and Leonard Dacre could ruffle it with the best, and go abroad with splendid trains; while an enthusiastic Protestant, the Queen's own cousin to boot, was obliged to put up with slights and sneers at his change of religion, simply because he had not power enough to keep North Country folk in awe. The precise terms of Cecil's reply are unknown; but he appears to have advised his *protégé* to seek betterment in a wealthy marriage. This counsel was not lost upon Sir Henry. During the following year he secured the hand and fortune of Katherine Nevill, eldest daughter and co-heir of John, last Lord Latimer¹ of the male line. The bride's mother was sister of Lady Northumberland, both being children of Henry Somerset, second Earl of Worcester. The match was in every respect an admirable one from the husband's point of view. It brought him the reversionary rights to the still large estates of this branch of the Nevill family, and eventually carried the Barony of Latimer into the Percy line.

Up to the time of his wedding Sir Henry Percy had carefully cultivated the friendship of his future father-in-law, cajoling the latter into the belief that he would find nothing but satisfaction in the alliance. This hallucination

¹ The widow of this Latimer's father and predecessor was Katherine Parr, who had married (and survived) Henry VIII.

was speedily to be dispelled. Hardly was Percy married, than he boldly attempted to oust Lord Latimer from the control of his own affairs. The project had evidently been planned in advance, very possibly with Cecil's connivance. Old Latimer's character strongly resembled that ascribed by Shakespeare to the imaginary Sir John Falstaff. He had lived a life of riot and debauchery, his chosen companions being gamesters, tavern bullies, and loose women. Upon the plea of preserving the family property from the hands of such people, Percy sought to have his wife's father declared of unsound mind—the natural sequence of such a declaration being his (Percy's) appointment as guardian of the Latimer revenues. But the old lord was considered by the Council to still possess wit sufficient for the management of his estates; and Sir Henry dropped further proceedings for the time being.

As Lord Latimer lived almost entirely in London, among his disreputable associates, Percy gradually arrogated to himself the position of head of the house. In this capacity he proceeded to busy himself with the matrimonial affairs of his sisters-in-law, using the good looks and prospects of these young ladies as baits to attract suitors whose influence might prove of value to himself. Latimer's second daughter he resolved to marry to the Lord Treasurer's first son, Thomas Cecil.¹ With this aim in view, he addressed the elder Cecil on January 25, 1561—(only a few months after his own wedding!)—making a formal offer of Mistress Nevill's hand, just as though no such persons as Lord Latimer or Lady Latimer existed. In fact he had not even spoken of the matter to the proposed bride, or to her mother, when he took it upon himself to make this match. The Lord Treasurer was assured that the fair co-heir of Latimer would prove an ideal wife for his son. She was, declared her brother-in-law, "*so good and vertuous, as hard it is to find suche a sparke of youthe in this Realme; ffor bothe is she very wise, sober of behavoure, womanly and in her doinges so*

¹ Afterwards 2nd Lord Burghley and 1st Earl of Exeter.

*temperate as if she bare the age double hir yeres. Of stature like to be goodlie, and of Beutie verry well ; hir haire browne, yet hir complexion very ffaire and cleare ; the ffavoure of hir face euery Bodie may iudge it to haue bothe grace and wysdome."*¹

Sir Henry was crafty enough to realise that, in his case, frankness was the best policy with Cecil. Accordingly he admits that his particular reason for desiring such a union was the connection which it would establish between himself and the family of the powerful minister:—"But the cheif cause (by my ffaithe) is ffor that I had rather to be lynked wth youe, than withe any man in this Realme, and so I hartely desier youe to excepte it. Sz, when youe haue posed this, and pawused of the same, I pray youe lett me be aduertisede."² At the close of this remarkable epistle, he requests Cecil to deal with him solely in the affair, and not to speak to Lord Latimer until everything has been settled. It would also be as well, he explains, to allow him to break the news to Lady Latimer, and to the damsel whose future was thus, without her knowledge, being mapped out ;—"ffor women will be willfull if they be not ffirst soughte unto."³

Percy's matchmaking was completely successful. The Lord Treasurer fell in with his views ; and Thomas Cecil was married to Sir Henry's sister-in-law in the course of the following year.⁴

The prospects of Sir Henry Percy seemed bright enough at this period. In high favour with the Queen and her Prime Minister ; wealthy enough, in right of his wife, to keep the state he desired at Tynemouth ; heir presumptive to the Earldom and estates of Northumberland ; and regarded throughout England as a bulwark of Protestantism ;—he seemed in a fair way to rise to the proudest honours in the gift of royalty. There were not wanting those who looked upon him as the predestined heir of Burghley's power. Certainly nobody suspected such a man of holding in secret

The
Northern
Rising, and
one of its
results.

¹ *Orig. State Papers*, vol. xxi. 26.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ From this union the present Marquis of Exeter is descended.

views favourable to the Roman Catholic religion. They could hardly do so in view of Sir Henry's loyal attitude at the outbreak of the Northern Rising. His own brother, and most of his kindred, were involved in that demonstration against the penal laws of Elizabeth; but Henry Percy apparently stood firmly by the Queen and the dominant creed. We have seen how he went so far as to offer his services (if not to join openly) in the pursuit of Northumberland. Sussex had nothing but praise for his conduct during the crisis. According to the President of the North, if the elder Percy were "*a papist and a traytour*," the younger was "*holly at the Queene's Majestie's devotion in the cawse of the Scottishe maryage,¹ sounde from this rebellion, redie with all his force to serve against them, and willing to venter his person with the first.*"² By way of reward for his steadfastness, Elizabeth sent him a letter of commendation expressly promising that the sins of Northumberland should not be visited upon his brother's head, and that the Earl's attainder should in no wise affect the blood of the next heir.³ Nothing of a more substantial nature, however, accompanied these fine phrases; nor was Sir Henry chosen as Queen's factor over the confiscated estates, as he had hoped to be.⁴ Praise and lip favour could not console Percy for such a disappointment. But as yet he had no idea of throwing off the mask of Protestantism. He continued his active support of Sussex in the North, and entered no protest against the persecutions which followed. There is an old tradition that the venerable priest, Plumtre, who was hanged before Durham Cathedral for having celebrated mass, "prophesied for Sir Harry Percy a life of trouble and a violent death." Percy does not appear to have taken an active part in the massacre of suspected Catholics, but he helped to capture and disarm these unfortunates. Moreover, when his brother wrote to him from Scotland for aid, he exerted himself to induce

¹ The project of a union between Queen Mary and the Duke of Norfolk.

² *State Papers*, Sussex to Cecil, January 7, 1570.

³ *State Papers*, Queen to Sir H. Percy, November 17, 1569.

⁴ This lucrative post fell to Sir John Forster.

the Earl to surrender, and positively refused to extend any kindness to a rebel.¹

Believing himself in a position to look with confidence for some material recognition of his services, Sir Henry ventured, early in 1571, to petition the Queen with regard to the Northumberland lands and titles. The attainted Earl, he pointed out, was without male issue, and, under the patent of Queen Mary, the Earldom must eventually pass to himself. He therefore asked Elizabeth to show her sense of his loyalty by conferring the dignity upon him there and then, without waiting for the late Earl's death.² The sending of this petition was most ill-advised. Elizabeth was fully determined to retain her hold upon the Northumberland revenues as long as decency permitted. For this reason, and not because of any feeling of clemency, she postponed the execution of the seventh Earl (which would, at the time, have terminated the Crown control of the estates). Consequently her grasping Majesty looked upon Sir Henry Percy's claim as most ill-timed and awkward. It was particularly awkward indeed, since Percy's consistent Protestantism and apparent good faith rendered it extremely difficult to find any adequate reason for refusing his request. Loyalty and zealous devotion to the new faith counted but lightly in Elizabeth's mind against the heavy rent-roll of the Northumberland acres; and so she confessed to her ministers, with the brazen candour which, like avarice, was a notable characteristic of the Tudor dynasty. Under the circumstances, even Burghley's voice was unable to protect Sir Henry Percy. A score of cunning brains were at work planning some means by which the latter might be effectually silenced, and it was not long before a scheme as ingenious as it was amazing had been devised for the arrest and imprisonment of the unsuspecting claimant. Briefly, it was proposed to involve Sir Henry in one of the alleged plots for the liberation of Mary Stuart, and on these grounds to lodge him in the Tower, and, if possible, contrive his attainder.

¹ Portion of this letter has been quoted already.

² A copy of this petition is preserved at Sion House.

In the corrupt state of society, largely brought about by Burghley's methods of government, there was little difficulty in finding false witnesses. It apparently made no difference to these plotters against his liberty that Percy had never seen or communicated with the Queen of Scots in his life, that he had never betrayed the slightest interest in her cause, and that he was cordially hated by Mary herself, as well as by all her friends and adherents. Despite these evident facts, a vague list of charges was drawn up against him, on the authority (it was pretended) of the Bishop of Ross, formerly Mary's minister to England, but at the time a prisoner in the Tower. The Bishop was quoted as having declared that Sir Henry Percy, when informed of the plan by which the royal prisoner was to be liberated, had agreed not to interfere with Mary and her escort, should they choose to pass by Tynemouth on their way towards the Border. No other evidence was produced in support of the allegations of treason, but a warrant for Percy's arrest was at once issued and signed by the Queen. The more one examines into the affair, the more one becomes convinced that the accused man was absolutely guiltless, and that the charges had been deliberately trumped up for the purpose of getting him out of the way. Next to Sir Henry himself, the persons most astonished by the publication of his "treason" were the very people with whom he was declared to have intrigued. The Duke of Norfolk scoffed at the bare idea of Percy's connection with any Catholic plot,¹ and Charles Paget alluded to the matter as a palpable absurdity. It is to be feared from their letters that the exiled English Catholics looked upon the arrest of Northumberland's Protestant brother with a certain grim satisfaction. He had chosen to desert their cause for that of the party in power, and this was his reward!

By order of October 23, 1571, Sir John Forster was commissioned to arrest Percy at Tynemouth Castle. But private warning of what was intended had already reached Sir Henry (probably through the instrumentality of Burghley), and he had hurried to London, enraged at the

¹ Murdin, p. 22: "Deposition of William Barker."

accusations of disloyalty, and confident of establishing his innocence. Vain hope! The Queen positively refused to grant him an audience; neither Burghley nor Leicester dared to say a word in his favour; and on November 15 he was committed to the custody of that stern Puritan, Sir Ralph Sadler. If anything further were needed to prove to Percy that he was the victim of a conspiracy, it was the identity of the person selected as his gaoler. Sadler had always disliked him, distrusted him, and as far back as the summer of 1559,¹ had gone out of his way to disparage him to Cecil as lacking in integrity. While in the charge of one so prejudiced Sir Henry was not likely to be allowed many chances of vindication. Lest, however, he might by any possible means succeed in establishing his blamelessness in respect of the supposed plot, Elizabeth's advisers decided to bring forward a secondary charge, to be held in reserve against him. A commission was appointed, consisting of Sir John Forster and two justices of the peace, to make a rigorous inquiry into the condition and defences of Tynemouth Castle under Percy's governorship. Of course it was to Forster's interest, as Crown factor over the Northumberland possessions, to keep Sir Henry in durance as long as possible. The Commission made an examination of the Castle, and returned a report to the effect that it was inadequately defended in the matter of ordnance. Upon this Percy was indicted for "criminal negligence in the Queen's service," and sent to the Tower, without being allowed to say one word in his own defence.

It is easy to imagine the bitter feelings which the heir of Northumberland must have experienced when he found himself thus mewed up, probably without cause, Sir Henry in the Tower. and certainly without trial. He was too quick-witted not to have divined by this time the real explanation of Elizabeth's resentment, viz., her fixed resolve not to part with the confiscated estates until they had been drained of a sum sufficient to satisfy her cupidity. It was for such an

¹ *State Papers*: Sadler to Cecil, August 29, 1559.

ungrateful mistress, then, that he had sacrificed his conscience and quarrelled with his kindred and friends. After all the years of unswerving obedience, discreet flattery, and well-acted religious fervour, he was doomed to linger in the Tower, among Papists and similar traitors, unless he agreed to forego his claim to the family estates. His brother, an avowed rebel and open contemner of the reformed religion, had, so far, been treated little worse than he. It is safe to say that the dismal days of his imprisonment wrought a great change in Henry Percy, and instilled into him that secret hatred of Queen Elizabeth which he ever afterwards retained.

Months passed by, and yet there was no hint of the charges against him being brought to trial. The Queen was probably unwilling to risk a trial upon such flimsy grounds, nor could her agents, with all their ingenuity, discover anything more damaging against the prisoner. It was felt, however, that if he could be tricked into a "confession of guilt," the difficulty would be at an end. Several persons professing the warmest friendship towards him advised Percy to make such a confession; but this he at first refused to do, although he was assured that an immediate pardon would result therefrom. The restraints of prison life grew more and more irksome, however, and, in the end, he was induced to make a vague statement to the effect that he had been cognisant of some scheme for Mary Stuart's release, and had negligently omitted to give warning to the Government. This admission was all that his enemies required. A new indictment was immediately drawn up against him, and preparations for his trial begun. On February 23, 1571-72, he addressed a letter to Leicester and Burghley, reiterating his unwise acknowledgment of "carelessness in her Majesty's service," and concluding with these words:—"*And altho' I ame fully detarmyned lykewysse without any grudginge or repinyngre tharat, dutyffully to abyde the tyme of suche corectyone as hir hyghnes shall thynke suffesent to satisfy hir displesure consauyed aganst me . . . yet yff it shall please her maieste to stand so myche*

*my good and grasius lady (and the rather by your Llordshipps' good meanes ffor me) as to releasse, or releue me of this harde imprasonement wyche I suffer, beinge more hurtfful to my wake body thene greuous to my mynde (I thanke God), I wyl promys to hir hyghnes by your honors nott only my best and uttermost endeuyre to contenne suche true and fathefull saruys as I haue bein heretofore always redy and wyllynge to do for her maieste, but to better it hereafter yeff I may possibly by any meanes."*¹

To this very humble petition the Queen turned a deaf ear. Percy waited vainly all through the spring and summer of 1572 for the release which had been promised to him if he "confessed" to an uncommitted fault. In August came the news that his brother, the Earl of Northumberland, had died upon the scaffold, and Sir Henry's own head began to sit uneasily upon his shoulders. But Elizabeth had, as yet, no intention of taking his life. She merely wished to impress upon him the dangers of running counter to her wishes, and the wisdom of accepting thankfully whatever rewards fell to his share, without venturing to ask for anything further.

On November 1, 1572, Leicester informed Burghley of the Queen's determination to bring the prisoner to a speedy trial. In the meantime she wished him to be very strictly guarded, and deprived of the various privileges which had been obtained for him through Burghley's influence with Sir Owen Hopton, lieutenant-governor of the Tower. "*Besyde,*" writes Leicester, "*she said she was informyd that Sir Hary Percy had, as yt wer, the liberty of the Tower and walked openlie uppon the Hill at his plesure, and who lyst talked with hym. . . . 'Thys manner of specyell favor shewyd to him above the rest' (sayth she) 'wyl cause some folks to thinke that it is for Burleigh's sake: therefore lett him have specyall care to give chardge, both to my learned counsell and the Judges, to have good regard to the Proceedings with him; for I think,' quoth she, 'his faulte is as grete as any man's, though yt be no*

¹ *State Papers*: Sir H. Percy to the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burghley. . . . Murdin.

hie treason.' Suerly I find she lookes to have Sir Hary Percy secretly¹ dealt wiithal, and the more for that yt toucheth not his lyfe." At last, after an imprisonment of over eighteen months, Percy was brought to trial. No evidence of any sort was produced, save the written admissions of negligence, which he had been prevailed upon to make in hope of pardon. These were regarded as tantamount to a plea of "guilty;" and the judges condemned him to forfeit to the Queen's privy purse a fine of 5000 marks. His salary as Governor of Tynemouth had not been paid for a year, and he was utterly unable to raise this large sum. Legally the Northumberland estates were his from the moment of his brother's execution, but he did not dare to claim them, and was accordingly sent back to his cell in the Tower, until he could raise at least £200 as security for the discharge of his fine. With the help of Burghley and old Lord Latimer (whom Percy had attempted to place under restraint) the earnest money was obtained and the prisoner set at liberty. He was even permitted to enter into possession of his landed property in the south of England; but it was expressly stipulated that he should confine himself as much as possible to the manor of Petworth, and that on no account was he to approach within ten miles of London. A few weeks later, however, we read that "*at the humble suit of his wife, being with child, Her Majestye for more ease permits the Earl of Northumberland to come to London or thereabouts, using himself circumspectly; and that he should not depart above one or two miles from thence until her highness's pleasure were known.*"² The last clause was inserted in order to prevent Percy from making a journey to the north of England.³

Strictly speaking, Sir Henry had been Earl of Northumberland since August 22, 1572.⁴ But the Queen did not at

¹ Such is the reading in the printed version of the letter. The original, however, is very hard to read, and the word may have been "*severely*."

² Murdin, p. 228.

³ Journal of Privy Council.

⁴ By the terms of Queen Mary's patent, his blood was not affected by the 7th Earl's attainder.

first choose to recognise him as such ; and, following the wise course which he had already pursued in regard to the estates of his late brother, he made no attempt to assert his rights. Such submissive conduct could not fail to propitiate her Majesty. Percy was invited to Court, where, by judiciously blended penitence and flattery, he succeeded in making an excellent impression. On February 8, 1575-76, he was allowed to take his seat in the House of Lords as eighth Earl. But the road to the North Country remained closed to him. York, Durham, and the Border counties were being slowly terrorised into submission, and men like Sadler, Bowes, and Forster wanted no ambitious Percy to take the work, and the rewards thereof, out of their hands. Still the Earl continued patient. He had accomplished much when he won back the family honours ; perhaps, in due time, he might once more occupy the Percy's hereditary position north of the Humber. In the meantime he applied himself with assiduity to the improvement of his southern manors, and to the various pursuits of a country gentleman. Hunting and hawking occupied most of his time, and it was upon safe subjects such as these that he corresponded with the busy world without. On September 9, 1576, we find him writing to Burghley that he "is sorry he was not at the killing of the great stag ; for he did bear a malice against him since he was first at hunting of him."¹ The stables at Petworth were capable of holding a very large number of horses, and Northumberland proposed to the Secretary that, since he was temporarily debarred from serving the Queen in more important affairs, he might turn his leisure to some use by breeding and training "steedes of war." Elizabeth, pleased with the suggestion appointed him a "commissioner of war-horses" for the county of Sussex. From 1577 to 1582 his name and that of his wife appear regularly in the lists of donors and recipients of New Year gifts ;² and the Queen even consented to visit Petworth. It is probable, however, that the expedition was abandoned on

¹ *State Papers.*

² *Calendar of State Papers.*

account of the wretched condition of the roads. The old saw, "Sussex for mire" was as true then as now; and Northumberland's brother-in-law, Cornwallis,¹ protested that the roughness and inequality of the various tracks across the downs rendered them wholly unsuited for a royal progress. In the latter's account of the various journeys of Elizabeth, he omits to mention that to Petworth;² but there is, or was, a local tradition to the effect that her Majesty did actually spend a night under the roof of the old mansion.

Seeing the renewed favour with which he was apparently regarded, the Earl's friends and adherents in the North began to agitate for his return to the Border. Sir George Bowes was now dead, and it was pointed out to the Queen that his place might be advantageously filled by a soldier and statesman of approved skill like the banished heir of Alnwick. Most of the disinterested Northern Protestants lent their support to the movement; and Sir Charles Rokeby, addressing Burghley in September 1580, accused the then Lord President, Shrewsbury, of treachery and incapacity, asking at the same time for Northumberland's nomination to the post.³ There remained, however, a few of the old ultra-Puritan party, such as Sadler and Forster, who hated the name and race of Percy, and who succeeded in persuading Elizabeth that, although outwardly loyal, the Earl was at heart a Romanist, devoted to the cause of Mary Stuart. Cecil, following the plan upon which he had decided at the time of Northumberland's arrest, remained absolutely neutral in the matter. In the end, the Queen expressed herself as not yet fully satisfied of the Earl's steadfastness in the established faith, and forbade him to go North until further orders. This was bad news to all those who had been

¹ Sir William Cornwallis of Brome, who had married Lucy, third daughter and co-heir of Lord Latimer.

² The forerunner of the present house at Petworth was a large structure, set in a ring of rolling downs and surrounded by stables, outhouses, and lofty walls.

³ *State Papers*.

hopefully building upon the rehabilitation of the House of Percy. To the Earl himself it came as a bitter disappointment; nor could the release of nearly all his Northern estates by the Crown (a measure of royal clemency which soon followed) altogether console him for this continued restraint. It was his belief that great properties could not be adequately administered without considerable personal supervision on the part of their owners; and although the chief Percy agent in the North (Sir Cuthbert Collingwood) was one in whom he trusted absolutely, it was nevertheless his earnest desire to see for himself the condition in which ten years of Government control and lawless raiding had left his lands and houses. Collingwood's first report only strengthened this wish, for it presented a most gloomy picture of affairs.¹ The outlawed Catholics of Redesdale and Tynedale had for several seasons made the country about Alnwick their chosen foraging ground; nor had the Scots been behindhand in ravaging this devoted territory. Poaching went on openly in broad daylight; and now that the Crown rangers had been ordered to resign their horns of office to those of the Earl, conflicts between the two bodies were of frequent occurrence, and the slaughter of deer proved so great that there was a possibility of the forests being completely denuded of game. The poorer tenants were in dire straits; for, owing to the depredations of various armed bands, they had been unable to keep either cattle or grain with any degree of safety. The terrible massacre of the Catholics, moreover, had left most of the smaller farms in the hands of women and young children, so that many thousand acres of arable land remained untilled and unproductive,—another evil result of Elizabeth's intolerant policy. But although Northumberland's friends laid all these facts before the Council, and pleaded that the strong hand of the master was needed to restore order and right abuses in the Percy domains, the old prohibition continued in force, and the Earl's restless spirit chafed more and more against the confinement of

¹ *Harleian MSS.*, vol. v.

Petworth. Excluded from active participation in state or military government, he found the simple occupations of the country irksome, and began to take a dangerous interest in following, from a distance, the devious turns and tricks of the great game of politics.

At first Northumberland's connection with the intrigues of the period was purely that of a discreet spectator; but as time went on, he brooded over the unjust treatment meted out to him by the Queen, and, feeling himself an injured man, lent a too ready ear to any projects which might tend to bring about an alteration in his condition. Whoever had a tale to tell of Catholic plots or cabals against the Ministry, found a warm welcome at Petworth. These things were, of course, duly reported to the Queen; for all the great officers of state had now adopted Burghley's system of espionage, and Hatton, Walsingham, and the rest had their jackals just like my Lord Secretary. Elizabeth felt that she had acted wisely in not making Henry Percy free of the North Country, and there were whispers at Court that the Earl's recently restored estates might soon find other owners.

The first note of royal displeasure reached Petworth in the form of a complaint concerning Northumberland's hospitality towards a French gentleman, the Chevalier de Préaux, Sieur du Bec,¹ who was suspected of being an emissary from the English Catholics abroad. News of Préaux's prolonged sojourn at Petworth was conveyed to Elizabeth, and Sir Christopher Hatton and others sought to

¹ The identity of this person has been a source of some confusion. He is variously styled "*Prevaux*," "*Bex*," &c., in the *State Papers*; while Mr. De Fonblanque identifies him as "*M. de Prevaux*," a gentleman of the chamber in the Duc d'Anjou's household, and then secretary to the French Embassy in London. He was actually the Chevalier Hector de Préaux, a cadet of the ancient house of Préaux in Touraine, and had acquired the estate of Bec through his wife Anne de Vardes, Dame du Bec. He afterwards rose to be Lieutenant-General under Henry IV. It is easy to understand how Northumberland mixed up "*Préaux*" and the territorial "*Bec*."

persuade her that the Frenchman's visit boded no good. Burghley despatched a warning note to Northumberland; to which the latter at once replied, protesting that the relations between his guest and himself had been perfectly harmless. The Earl explains that his eldest son, who was resident in Paris, had fallen "*in great extremitye of siknes and danger of lyffe*,"—a not unnatural result of the gay life which that young man had been leading.¹ "*Being advertysed thereof*," continues the letter, "*I sent one of my servants to Mons. de Marchemonde,² as well to understande if he had any worde in what cass my boye was in, as also to require him to reseve from me one hundrythe poundes, and to cause so myche mony be delyvered to my boye with all the expedition he myght. . . . Hereupon my servante delyvered one hundrythe poundes in angelles to Mons. Marchemonde as in way of exchange, who had resayved at that instante letters from my sone of his recoverye to helthe; and being withall determyned to geve me knowlyche of his departure and to bide me farewell sent Mons. du Bex unto me, both with the letters and message.*"³ It does not appear why Northumberland's servant was not considered good enough to carry Marchmont's compliments to Petworth. Perhaps the Chevalier de Préaux desired to see something of English country life before returning to Paris. If so, he was destined to disappointment, for Northumberland declares that he (Préaux) was overtaken by a severe illness the morning after his arrival, and lay for months confined to bed under the care of one "*master doctor Jhonsone*."⁴

The Earl's enemies at court declined to accept this specious story as explanatory of the lengthy stay of M. d'Anjou's servant at Petworth, and Northumberland's doings were watched more carefully than ever. It was not long before new and graver cause for suspicion arose.

¹ The youth of Lord Percy, afterwards ninth Earl, was anything but regular, if one may believe the accounts of his mother, Lady Northumberland, and others.

² De Marchmont, the French Ambassador to England.

³ Northumberland to Burghley, September 25, 1582; *Harleian MSS.*, vol. v. 6993.

⁴ *Ibid.*

During the winter of 1582-83, while the Throckmorton scheme for Mary Stuart's release was being hatched, several of the conspirators visited the Earl and were entertained by him. Of course, as Mr. De Fonblanque points out, many of these "had been his friends in former times, and his reception of such persons at Petworth, and even his general sympathy with their cause, is compatible with his innocence of complicity in their more criminal designs."¹ But Elizabeth was not one to admit of any fine distinctions between actual participation in the plot and mere passive sympathy with its aims. To her mind the presence at Petworth of such men as Arundel, Dr. Parry, Chidioc Tichbourne, and the Irish conspirators Patrick and Robert Barnewall, was quite sufficient to brand Northumberland as a "traitor and relapsed Papist." The Earl was summoned to London, and there ordered to confine himself to the precincts of his town-house,² until full investigation could be made into his conduct.

Despite their utmost efforts, Hatton and the other persons entrusted with the collection of this part of the evidence could produce little or nothing of an incriminatory nature against Northumberland or his cousin, Arundel, beyond the admitted fact that they had been on terms of intimacy with sundry friends and adherents of the Scottish Queen. Indeed, most of the "depositions" laid before the Council in regard to the Earl are ridiculously trivial. "One man deposed that he had been employed by the Earl to carry a pack from Petworth to Arundel, which was '*so weighty that it almost spoilt his horse*;' another that '*on the day that Arthur Shaftoe's house was searched, the Earl lent his white gelding*' to a suspected person; and a third stated that among the conspirators he had '*seen somebody disguised in a*

¹ *Annals of the House of Percy*, vol. ii.

² The Northumberland House of the day was near St. Andrews Hill, Blackfriars, and opposite the church of St. Andrews Wardrobe. Adjoining was a tenement afterwards inhabited by William Shakespeare while an actor at the Blackfriars Theatre. When Shakespeare retired to Stratford, he rented this latter house to one Robinson. [See *Will of William Shakespeare*.]

white frieze jerkin, who might have been the Earl of Northumberland."¹ Nevertheless, when Throckmorton and Lord Henry Howard were sent to the Tower in February 1584, the Queen insisted that Northumberland should also be committed. The unhappy Throckmorton was three times subjected to the rack, but refused to implicate any of his associates in the conspiracy. A fourth application of the torture proved too much for his fortitude, however, and he made a so-called "confession" to Elizabeth's Inquisitors, in which Northumberland and others were admitted to be relapsed Romanists and sympathisers with Queen Mary's cause. But if the Puritan "Holy Office" hoped by these means to secure the conviction of Earl Henry they were deprived of that satisfaction; for Throckmorton solemnly retracted on the scaffold almost everything which had been wrung from him in the torture-chamber.

Greatly against her will, the Queen was forced to set Northumberland at liberty. But she had no idea of allowing him to wholly escape unpunished, and so commanded that, as a mark of her displeasure, he should be removed from the governorship of Tynemouth Castle.

The Earl protested strenuously against this piece of feminine spite, pointing out that he was being punished for sins which could not be proved against him, and that he had governed Tynemouth loyally for her Majesty during a quarter of a century.² Furthermore he pleaded that such a measure would deprive some twenty of his old soldiers—men who had fought stoutly for the Queen on many a field—of their sole means of livelihood; for if the governorship were taken from him, he could not, in consequence of his own large family, spare enough money to maintain these veteran retainers any longer. Disgrace, too, would attach to his name in the North Country, and all his former

¹ De Fonblanque, quoting from *Original State Papers*, Record Office.

² He had been appointed to the post, while still in his minority, by Queen Mary, and had twice re-fortified Tynemouth Castle almost entirely at his own expense.

services be forgotten.¹ These pleas fell upon deaf ears. Northumberland was dismissed, and the wardenship of Tynemouth bestowed upon Sir Francis Russell.

If Northumberland had been indiscreet before his second imprisonment, he now became positively reckless, openly professing the Roman Catholic religion, and mixing freely with those most interested in the welfare of the Scottish Queen. Two years before, an acquaintance had sprung up between him and Charles Paget,² in consequence of the latter's kindness to young Lord Percy while a resident of Paris. Paget's name was written very largely in the Government's black books, and when he visited England on a pretended matter of business, spies dogged his footsteps everywhere. One of his first visits was to the town residence of Northumberland, and subsequently he was invited to Petworth, in company with his brother, Lord Paget. This supplied the Earl's relentless foes with the opportunity they longed for. In spite of Burghley's efforts to exculpate him, Northumberland was once more arrested on a charge of holding treasonable conferences with the Pagets, Babington, and Robert Barnewall. "*Yesterday*," wrote Walsingham to Sir E. Stafford, on December 16, 1584, "*the Earl of Northumberland was committed prisoner to his own house, under the charge of Sir S. Leighton, for conference with Charles Paget. He confesses the conference; but denies that he knew of any cause for Paget's return to England, except to confer with his brother, Lord Paget, on private affairs; but others say that the Earl knew more than this. . . . Charles Paget is a most dangerous instrument, and I wish, for Northumberland's sake, he had never been born.*"³

Once again the ingenuity of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, was strained to bring home to the Earl

¹ *Original State Papers, Addenda*; Record Office (1580-1625).

² One of the most energetic secret agents of the Catholic party. He was attainted in the following year, together with his elder brother William, Lord Paget, Sir Francis Englefield, and several others.

³ Raleigh to Sir Robert Cecil (Murdin, p. 811).

the charges of conspiracy. His prosecution was pushed forward with a persistent malevolence which could only have emanated from persons keenly desirous of compassing his death or the confiscation of his estates. Sir Walter Raleigh¹ and many of the Earl's Catholic friends point to Hatton as the secret enemy who laboured thus relentlessly to bring the accused to the scaffold. Others advance the Queen's covetousness as the real motive of this and former attempts to convict the holder of the Percy estates. But whoever his chief antagonists may have been, they failed for the third time to prove him guilty of any overt act of treason.

The Queen of Scots herself, while sending messages of condolence to Throckmorton and Lord Henry Howard, absolutely disowned any connection with Northumberland, and this too in a private letter to one of her agents, intercepted by the Crown.² All the arrested conspirators, save one, denied that the Earl was privy to their schemes. The solitary exception, William Shelley, while being tortured on the rack, is said to have acknowledged that Northumberland was under promise to join the plot; but, as in Throckmorton's case, Shelley afterwards retracted this statement. Years afterwards, while a free agent in France, and when nobody could be harmed or benefited by the declaration, Charles Paget solemnly denied that the Earl had given any such pledge, or that he had taken any part in the intrigue. Northumberland himself demanded an inquiry; which, he maintained, would prove him free from any taint of treason. That he had reverted to the old faith he tacitly admitted, nor did he conceal his sympathy with the imprisoned heir to the throne; but to all the other charges made against him he returned an indignant denial. The persistence with which he asked for a full investigation, and his refusal of all offers of compromise, speak volumes in his favour. Hatton admits that he tempted the Earl with the promise of a free pardon if he agreed to sign some form of trumped up

¹ Raleigh to Sir Robert Cecil (Murdin, p. 811).

² Mary Stuart to M. de Maurissiere, 1584; *Harleian MSS.*, No. 1582.

confession, but that his prisoner absolutely refused to be entrapped.¹

Shortly before Christmas, Northumberland was removed from his own house, and, for the third time, imprisoned in the Tower. The journey thither was made by water, and it was noted as ominous that on this occasion the Earl passed through "Traitor's Gate." From his cell he wrote appeal after appeal,—to the Queen, to Burghley, and even to the Vice-Chancellor (Hatton), whom he had learned to look upon as the most active of his persecutors. But all his arguments and prayers were left unheeded. The Government did not even dare to accord him the poor privilege of a secret inquiry, which, failing open trial by his peers, he was "full willing to accept." The plain truth was, that while they desired his conviction on charges of high treason, the evidence in their possession merely warranted his arraignment as a religious backslider and confessed harbourer of Roman Catholics. Burghley, too, remained neutral in the case of his friend, and refused to lend either his own talents as prosecutor, or the services of his bloodhound spies to the cause of the Earl's adversaries. Thus matters stood when—at an ill time for the good name of Queen Elizabeth or of her "frisking favourite,"² Hatton—all England was shocked by the news that the Earl had met with a violent death in the Tower.

Did Northumberland commit self-murder, or was he done to death as the result of a conspiracy? To this day the mystery remains as dark as the midnight
Suicide or
assassina-
tion? under cover of which the crime itself, suicide or assassination, was committed. From that summer morning when the finding of Henry Percy's mangled corpse was first noised abroad, controversy and party rancour have raged around the subject. Let the reader

¹ Statement of Sir C. Hatton. *A True and Summarie Report: Lord Somers' Tracts*, vol. i.

² "Frisking" was an expression applied to Hatton by stout old Sir John Perrot, the Queen's half-brother, who was vindictively prosecuted by the Vice-Chamberlain.

draw his own conclusions from the evidence here set forth, remembering first that there are no less than four distinct theories, each of which professes to give the true version of the tragedy. The Puritan Government maintained that Northumberland, knowing himself to be a traitor and a rebel, and aware that his treason was discovered, had taken his own life in order to avoid the disgrace of a public execution. The more moderate Protestants, while accepting the hypothesis of suicide, refused to admit the Earl's treason, and held that he had deliberately slain himself in order to avoid unjust condemnation at the hands of unscrupulous foes, and in the hope, by this desperate means, of saving his threatened estates for his eldest son, whom he dearly loved. Again, many persons of note—among them Sir Walter Raleigh—accused Sir Christopher Hatton of assassinating the Earl, either for his own private ends or in obedience to the promptings of higher authority. And, lastly, the Catholic and Marian faction, with one accord, proclaimed Elizabeth guilty of having procured Northumberland's murder in order to possess herself of his property.

On the evening of June 20, 1585, Sir Christopher Hatton (in his capacity of Vice-Chamberlain) sent sealed instructions to Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, commanding the latter to remove the special warder who had hitherto guarded the Earl of Northumberland's person and to substitute one Bailiffe, a tenant and retainer of Hatton's own. This was done, and Bailiffe entered upon his new duties. Early next morning, Northumberland was found in his bed, shot through the heart. A coroner's jury was hastily summoned, consisting of Tower officials and tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Bailiffe, Sir Owen Hopton, and a few other witnesses were examined, and the jury returned a verdict to the effect that the Earl of Northumberland, having secretly obtained possession of a dagger, or pistol, had "*bolted the door on the inner side, lest any man should foresee or withstande his devilish intent and purpose; and not having the Almighty God or his feare before*

his eies, but being moued and seduced by the instigation of the devil, did discharge the said dag into his bodie and hearte . . . of which he instantlie died."

Little time was lost in getting rid of the dead man's body, which was buried at daybreak on June 23, in the Church of St. Peter-ad-Vincula, within the precincts of the Tower. The grim news spread far and near, circulated by the various foreign representatives and secret agents in London, and the verdict of *felo de se* was greeted on every side by a chorus of incredulity. At first even staunch supporters of the dominant party refused to believe that Northumberland had taken his own life. If the Puritans fancied that they had heard the last of the Earl, when "his wretched carcase," as they called it,¹ was bestowed in the tomb, they were quickly disillusioned. On June 26, Walsingham received a letter from Sir Francis Russell, voicing the scepticism which prevailed among Northern Protestants. "*The manner of Lord Northumberland's death,*" wrote his successor in the government of Tynemouth, "*will hardlie be believed in this countrie to be as you have written.*"² From Paris the English Ambassador protested that he could persuade no person of intelligence to credit the finding of the Tower jury; and added on his own account a broad hint that the official story needed mending.³ The French and Spanish Ambassadors to England, in reporting the event to their several Governments, expressly stated that Northumberland had been assassinated with the aid and connivance of Elizabeth;⁴ and this was the version generally accepted throughout the Continent, alike by Catholics and Protestants. At Cologne there was published a flaming tract entitled *Crudelitas Calvinianæ Exempla duo recentissima ex Anglia*, in which the British "Calvinist" leaders, and notably the Queen, were charged with "foul and deliberate murder." This work was at once translated into French, German, Spanish, Italian, and English, and in the last-named tongue it was smuggled to these shores, and distributed through the three kingdoms.

¹ Holinshed.

² *State Papers*, June-July, 1585.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

Such was the effect produced throughout Europe by this attack, and by the many suspicious circumstances surrounding the Earl's death, that the Queen was advised by Burghley and Walsingham to hold a Star Chamber inquiry into the affair. This secret tribunal met on July 23, and, after long deliberation, issued a reply to the Cologne tract. The second pamphlet, which professes to be *A True and Summarie Reporte* of the tragic occurrence in the Tower, bears evidence of having been hastily and injudiciously compiled. Burghley's cunning and caution were sadly lacking in the men who aimed at succeeding to his power. Many barefaced perversions of the truth were allowed to slip into the *True and Summarie Reporte*, such as the absurd statement of Attorney-General Popham that the eighth Earl of Northumberland had been implicated in the Rising of 1569, and had "*as farr plunged into the same as the Earl his brother.*" The contention of Popham and others was that new evidence had been brought to light convicting the deceased of treason, and that seeing no means of escape from the scaffold, he had committed self-murder. The nature of the supposed new evidence, however, is not given, and it is only alluded to in the vaguest terms. In the report of the inquest, it had been stated that one of the Earl's attendants, James Pryce, yeoman, had on June 16 procured a pistol and ammunition for his master. But although Pryce was himself a prisoner in the Tower at the time, he was not summoned as a witness either at the inquest or at the subsequent Star Chamber investigation.¹ Thus a most important point was left practically unproved—*i.e.* the manner in which Northumberland had obtained the weapon with which he was supposed to have killed himself. On the other hand, it was established that the man Bailiffe had been specially placed on duty in the prisoner's apartments only a few hours before the catastrophe; that Bailiffe was a creature of Sir Christopher Hatton, and had been suddenly appointed warder by Hatton's orders;

¹ Howell's *State Trials*, vol. i.

and that Bailiffe's ears alone had heard the shots fired which terminated Northumberland's life.

The evidence of this substitute warder was that, having retired to rest in the chamber adjoining the Earl's cell, he was aroused from sleep "*a little after midnight . . . by a noise so sudden and so greate, like the falling of some dore, or rather a piece of the house ;*" and so "*started out of his bed, and crying to the Earle, with a loud voice said, 'My Lord, knowe you what this is ?'*" ; but receiving no answer, he continued his crying and calling, until an olde man that lay without spake unto him, saying, '*Gentleman, shall I not call the watch, seeing he will not speake ?*' 'Yea,' quoth Bailiffe, '*for God's sake !*' Then did this olde man rise, and call one of the watch, whom Bailiffe intreaded with all possible speede to call Master Lieutenant unto him. In the meane time Bailiffe heard the Earle give a long and grievous grone, and after that gave a second grone ; and then the Lieutenant (being come) called to the Earle, who not answering, Bailiffe cried to the Lieutenant to breake open the Earle's chamber dore, bolted unto him on the inner side, which was done : and then they found the Erle dead in his bed, and by his bedside a dagge, where-with he had killed himselfe."¹

A few hours after the discovery of the corpse, it was carefully examined by our honest old friend, Lord Hunsdon, and by a skilled surgeon. Hunsdon's reported evidence is that they found the Earl's heart "*pearced and torn in diuerse lobes and pieces, three of his ribbes broken, and the spinebone of his back cut almost in sunder.*"² The three bullets with which the pistol had been loaded were extracted from the body under Hunsdon's supervision ; and the surgeon declared that, from the terrible nature of the injuries, death must have been instantaneous.³

It is upon this expert testimony that the accusation of murder chiefly rests ; for the arguments advanced in the Cologne tract are at best vague and unsatisfactory. The

¹ *A True and Summarie Reports.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

surgeon's evidence gives the lie direct to part of Bailiffe's sworn statement, and so tends to invalidate the entire narrative put forward in defence of the Queen's ministers. If Northumberland died immediately after the discharge of the pistol, how was it that Bailiffe heard him "*give a long and most grievous grone, and after that . . . a second grone,*" when, according to the warder's own story, many minutes must have elapsed from the time that he heard the shot fired "*a little after midnight*" ? Between the firing of the shot and the Earl's last groan, Bailiffe alleged that he found time to leave his bed in the adjoining room ; to call loudly upon the prisoner ; to ascertain that the latter's door had been bolted upon the inside ; to continue "crying and calling" until he awakened an old man sleeping without ; to despatch this old man for the watch ; and finally to send one of the watchmen in quest of the Lieutenant of the Tower.¹ That, under the circumstances, Northumberland should have been able to utter two distinct groans appears in itself impossible ; that he should have given these evidences of life so long after the infliction of the wounds is impossible indeed. And if Bailiffe was capable of perjuring himself in this part of his testimony, may not the statement relating to the bolting of the Earl's door upon the inside (to which he alone bore witness) have been also untrue ? Thus at least argued the many who believed that Northumberland had been done to death at the instigation of the Queen or the Vice-Chamberlain. These people furthermore pointed out that, even granting the inner bolting of Northumberland's door, no search had been made through the cell for concealed assailants, or for any secret mode of egress by which such could escape. The facts that Bailiffe was in Hatton's employ, and that James Pryce (who was said to have supplied the Earl with pistol, powder, and bullets) had not been called upon to give evidence, either at the inquest or Star Chamber inquiry, were

¹ The Lieutenant, Sir O. Hopton, deposed that he was called at "lesse than a quarter of an hour before one of the clocke"—more than forty-five minutes after the shot was said to have been fired, but only a few minutes after the Earl gave his last groan !

also made use of by the accusers of the Government. Altogether *The True and Summarie Reporte* rather damaged the case of the Crown than otherwise in the minds of those disposed to weigh the evidence impartially; and it is perhaps well for the memories of Sir Christopher Hatton and others that the Catholic party on the Continent did not esteem Earl Henry sufficiently to publish a reply.

It has been said that Sir Walter Raleigh and other Protestants looked upon Hatton as the Earl's assassin. In proof of this, a letter from Raleigh to Robert Cecil in 1601 may be quoted. Sir Walter, arguing against blood-feuds handed down from father to son, writes:—"For your own father, that was esteemed to be the contriver of Norfolk's ruin,¹ yet his (Norfolk's) son² followeth your father's son, and loveth him; Somerset made no revenge on the Duke of Northumberland's heirs;³ . . . and Northumberland that now is,⁴ thinks not of Hatton's issue."⁵ This is plain speaking, and establishes clearly enough the fact that Raleigh regarded the connection of Hatton with the bloody affair in the Tower as a matter of history. Nor does Cecil, in replying to this letter, attempt to combat the belief. The majority of modern historians, however, prefer to disregard all discrepancies in the evidence, and to hold that, for no apparently adequate reason, the eighth Earl of Northumberland disregarded the teachings of Christianity, and deliberately took his own life.

The eighth Earl left behind him ten children—eight sons, and two daughters.⁶ The sons we shall meet again in the course of this history: of the daughters, the elder, Lucy, was twice married, firstly to Sir John Wotton (whereby hangs a romance presently to be narrated), and secondly to Sir Hugh Owen of Anglesea; while the younger, Eleanor, became the wife of William Herbert, first Lord Powis. The Countess of Northumberland survived her first husband

¹ Burghley had been largely instrumental in bringing the fourth Duke of Norfolk to the scaffold, in 1572.

² Allusion is made to Thomas, Lord Howard de Walden.

³ The downfall and death of the Protector Somerset were brought about by Dudley, Duke of Northumberland.

⁴ The ninth Earl.

⁵ Murdin, p. 811.

⁶ See *Genealogy*, Table III.

eleven years.¹ Having inherited much of the large estates of the Nevills, Lords Latimer, the widowed dame was much sought after by fortune-hunters, and eventually bestowed her hand and fortune upon a kinsman of the deceased Earl, one Francis Fitton of Binfield in Berkshire, who had long officiated as her steward. This alliance was vigorously opposed by the ninth Earl of Northumberland.

The eighth Earl had made his will while in the Tower, several months before his death. He desired to be buried with his ancestors in Beverley Minster, "if it should fortune him to die in the county of York." As we have seen, his death occurred far from his native country, and his body was laid to rest under the flagstones of St. Peter's-ad-Vincula within the shadow of the Tower.

¹ She died October 28, 1596.

II

HENRY PERCY, who now became ninth Earl of Northumberland, first saw the light at Tynemouth Castle in May 1564. He was thus a mere child at the outbreak of the Northern Rising; but the brutal massacres by which Elizabeth and Cecil sought to avenge that rash and ill-directed enterprise made a deep impression upon his youthful mind, and rendered him (although personally of the State religion) a life-long advocate of toleration towards the Catholics. His father, at that time a professed zealot in the Protestant cause, took care to bring up the heir of the house strictly in accordance with the new doctrines; and even in after years, when the eighth Earl himself fell under suspicion of Romanism, every effort was made to "*guard the young lorde against temptation and popish friendes.*" His earliest tutor and religious instructor was one Thompson, "*a loyall Protestant,*" parson of Egremond in Yorkshire.¹ When he had attained the age of eighteen, Lord Percy was sent abroad for the purpose of broadening his mind by travel. Burghley sent him a long letter of advice, in which he was cautioned against the wiles of Roman Catholic agents in Paris and elsewhere, and particularly against his aunt, the exiled Countess of Northumberland, for whose powers of intrigue the minister entertained a lively respect. Percy acknowledged the receipt of these counsels with becoming modesty. "*Thanks,*" he wrote, "*for your exquisite and rare counsel, and your directions for my travels, which I would gladly recompense.*"² The "travels" in question do not appear to have been extensive, even for the time. The north of Italy was

¹ *Syon House MSS.*, 1575-79.

² Lord Percy to Burghley, from Paris, April 16, 1581; *State Papers*.

visited, as were parts of France and the Low Countries ; but we soon find the pilgrim permanently established at Paris, where his "studies" were not of unmixed benefit. Puritan spies surrounded him, and his every movement was duly reported to Burghley and Walsingham, lest by any chance he might follow in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and uncle, and permit the Romanist sympathies inherent in his blood to gain the mastery. Indeed, the zeal of those appointed to watch over this hope of Protestantism led them at times to lay undue stress upon trivial details, and to make accusations which they could not substantiate. Percy looked upon the Catholics with a liberal eye, and had more than one acquaintance among them ; but there is no proof that he evinced any leanings towards the old faith or meditated disloyalty to her whom he had been taught to regard as head of the English Church. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Cobham, the British Ambassador to Paris, complained to his Government that the young lord consorted with at least one "*most dangerous Papist*," in the person of that Charles Paget—stormcock of Catholic agitation—whose acquaintance was at a later date to brew for the father trouble far more serious than it now did for the son.¹ Even to know Charles Paget was suggestive of backsliding in Cobham's mind, and doubtless in that of Secretary Walsingham as well, for the latter lost no time in protesting to the Earl of Northumberland against Lord Percy's undesirable Parisian acquaintance. Northumberland, who loved his eldest son dearly, and feared lest the lad's inheritance might be imperilled by any entanglements with men of the Paget stamp, sent a trusty servant to remonstrate with Percy and put him in possession of all that Cobham had reported. It is highly probable that the intercourse between Paget and the future Earl was, in that stage at least, purely social, and that the former spoke the truth when he accused Cobham of being a mischief-maker, and assured Secretary Walsingham by letter that he had never sought to turn Lord Percy from the reformed faith. Rather than cause

¹ See *ante*.

his young friend any inconvenience, Paget declared himself willing to move forthwith to a distant quarter of Paris ; for, at the time, Percy "*lodged not far from him,*" and their companionship had been merely that of neighbours and compatriots. The heir of Northumberland stood sadly in need of friendly advice ; and Charles Paget declared that his efforts had been mainly directed towards the guidance and protection of this raw boy from the innumerable snares and pitfalls of the Gallic capital, "*he (Percy) not being in a commendable course, either for studies or manners.*"¹ These statements are borne out by Percy himself in two epistles, one directed to Walsingham, the other to Northumberland. That intended for the Secretary's eye runs in this wise :—

"Righte honorable ; I doe vnderstande that Sir Henry Cobham, Ambassador here for her maieste, hathe not long agoe informed your Honnor, both against me and Mr. Pagett, for conuersing some tymes one with the other, and that Mr. Pagett should not onelie seeke to dissuade me from the Religion I have been nourrished and bredd upp in, but also deale with me in vndewtifull Practises. When I hard of this Manner of my Lo : Ambassador's proceedinge, it greued me very muche, in respect of his place, what force his Advertisement might carie against me, to bringe me in Disgrace with her Maieste, and Displeasure with my Lo : my Father, both whiche thinges I will euer seeke [to avoid] by all possible meanes, as that I am bounde vnto by the Lawes of God, Nature and Reason. But when I better aduised my selfe, my grieffe began to diminish, bycause I remembered your Wisdome and Indifference to be suche, as that this bare Reporte of my Lo : Ambassador, grounded without Reason or Trewth, should not be imparted to any by your Honor to my hurte, until suche tyme as you harde what I could say in my Defence. And tharfore havinge this good Occasion presented vnto me by the comminge of my Lo : my Father's man, who is sent of pourpose by his Lo : to me with charge as I tender my Dewtie towardes him to signifie all thinges in trewth vnto his Lo : I could not lett slipp the same, but in like sorte by thes lines declare vnto your Honor that

¹ Charles Paget to Walsingham, March 4, 1582 ; *State Papers*.

*Mr. Pagett did sometymes resorte unto me, of whom I haue neuer harde other speches then becommeth a dewtifull subiect to her Majeste, and great Wellwiller to me. Assuringe your Honor that if he had delte with me in other termes, either for matters of Religion or otherwise, I would not haue allowed of his Companie, but hated his Person. Neuertheless when I heard by my Lo: Ambassador suche harde Construction of Mr. Pagett his Resorte to me, bycause I wold haue it appear how loth I wold be to do anie thinge that might anie way shake me in the Fauor of her Maieste, I prayed Mr. Pagett to forbear my Companie. Whiche verie willinglie he yeelded unto, and as soone as he could prouide him a lodging further from me, he presentlie removed."*¹

By the same servant, Lord Percy sent to reassure his anxious father, and to urge that Cobham might be called upon to prove his loose assertions. This was accordingly done; and the over-keen Ambassador failed ignominiously in establishing any of the charges. Indeed, he found himself compelled to apologise very humbly to Charles Paget; a fact which, we may be sure, was made the most of by that astute plotter against Elizabethan methods of government. Paget certainly kept his word in regard to a change of residence, but his acquaintance with Percy did not by any means terminate, and the part which he had played in the recent difficulty led to his gaining that for which (if we are to believe his opponents) he had been striving all along—*i.e.* the friendship of old Northumberland. Very shortly after the Cobham incident we find him in confidential correspondence with the Earl,² and it has been told how he subsequently visited Northumberland House as an honoured guest.³

The various English spies in Paris continued to keep the Home Government fully informed of all Lord Percy's

¹ Lord Percy to Secretary Walsingham, April 5, 1582; *Original State Paper* (Holograph), Record Office.

² *State Papers: Syn. MSS.*

³ See *ante*, under eighth Earl.

movements, of the persons with whom he most consorted, and of the more or less vague tales which were circulated re-

A young
noble of
Tudor
times; his
Parisian
doings.

specting his matrimonial, religious, and political views. The life led by the young man at this period appears to have been a medley of study and amusement, the latter at first predominating. The Earl his father (then living *like a rustike* at Petworth) kept him lavishly supplied with money, and his allowance is said to have "equalled that of a prince of the blood." But, in spite of the temptations by which he was surrounded, Percý did not drain the cup of pleasure to the dregs. From lapsing into the graver excesses of that depraved period, he was saved through the shrewd precepts and example of Charles Paget. But he acquired a taste for the gaming table, periodically losing large sums of money thereby, and in other paths of dissipation he is known to have strayed at times. The unwonted indulgences of his first year of Parisian life brought on *great extremitye of siknes and danger of lyffe*"¹ in the shape of a raging fever. His constitution was still vigorous, however, and he recovered from this attack, but the lesson was not thrown away upon him. After his convalescence, he took up the study of history and the occult sciences with great avidity, devoting to reading and experiments as much of his time as he had formerly expended in less learned pursuits. Alchemy and astrology possessed for him especial attractions. He purchased a crystal divining globe, cast his friends' horoscopes with the ease of a Nostrodamus, and laboured hopefully to transmute the baser metals into gold. Masked dames and richly clad gallants frequented his apartments no longer. In their place came a train of solemn personages, whose sad-coloured garments at first led Sir Henry Cobham to think them Romish agents, but whom he soon discovered to be men of science, the new associates of Lord Percy. The young man's reputation as a worker of mystery spread abroad throughout Paris, and even the Puritan spies began to

¹ See Northumberland's letter to Burghley, September 25, 1582; *Harleian MSS.*, vol. v. 6993.

entertain a fear of those accomplishments which afterwards earned for their possessor the name of the "Wizard Earl." In history Percy read the works of Guicciardini and Holinshed, and the French painters of the day found him an intelligent patron.

In 1583 reports were sent home that the heir of Northumberland had fallen in love with "Lady Kitson's daughter," and that he had even asked this damsel's hand in marriage. But this affair came to naught; and a little later the Catholic party suggested an alliance between the young Arabella Stuart, third in the line of succession to the throne,¹ and Northumberland. The Lady Arabella was barely nine years old at the time, however; so that this project was also set aside, to be revived on a later occasion.

Young Percy's peaceful researches were rudely interrupted during the summer of 1585 by the news of his father's death in the Tower. Whatever were the faults of the eighth Earl of Northumberland, he had always shown himself passionately attached to his eldest son, and this affection had been reciprocated to the full. The grief of the new chief of the Percies was bitter in the extreme, and for weeks his door remained closed to the world. Then a rumour spread abroad, and was duly conveyed to England, that he had embraced the Catholic Church, and forsworn all allegiance to Elizabeth. The truth was that William Percy, the Earl's next brother, had arrived from England with an account of the inquest and of the many highly suspicious circumstances connected with the death of his unhappy parent. These facts, added to the stories of Hatton's guilt which had been from the first in circulation, so inflamed the Earl against the English Government that he did indeed lend ear to the intrigues of the Catholic and Stuart parties. Convinced that the ministers of Elizabeth, if not the Queen herself, had deliber-

The Tower
tragedy
and its
results.

¹ Arabella Stuart was directly descended from Henry VII., being the daughter of Charles Stuart, Duke of Lennox, brother of Darnley.

ately brought about his father's murder, Northumberland's hot temper urged him towards revenge. In August 1585, the spy Thomas Rogers reported to Walsingham that the Earl and his brother William were implicated with the Duc de Guise¹ in the preparation of a great naval and military expedition against England, with the dual object of placing Mary Stuart upon the throne and avenging the supposed murder in the Tower.² Nothing was done by the British Ambassador in Paris or by the Home Government to dissuade the youthful Percies from any rash act of the kind, and it is to be feared that, to at least one section of the dominant party, the rebellion of yet another Northumberland might have proved by no means displeasing. Fortunately for the safety of the Percy family estates, Guise and the French Leaguers had more pressing matters to think of than an invasion of England, and if the plot described by Rogers ever existed, it did not develop beyond the early stages. Acting on the cautious advice of personal friends—was not the cunning Paget one of these?—the Earl dissembled his feelings towards the ministry, and asked permission to return to England. This was granted after some delay, and early in 1586 we find him installed in the family residence at Blackfriars. But although he hid whatever revengeful sentiments he entertained against those in power, the cruel death of his father was never by him forgotten or forgiven. For years he was accustomed to give way to fits of melancholy occasioned by that occurrence, and to style himself a wretched parricide for serving under those whose hands were red with the blood of so loving a sire. As late as 1592, the spy Paul Crushe or Cruise³ informed Burghley that "*the present Earl of Northumberland, who is discontent about his father's death, may be seduced thereby to the See of Rome.*"⁴ It is said that the Catholic party took every opportunity to

¹ Henri, "*Le Balafre*," fourth Duc de Guise, the great leader of the Catholic League.

² Rogers to Walsingham; *State Papers*.

³ An Irish Romanist secretly in the pay of the ministry.

⁴ Crushe to Burghley, March 1592; *State Papers*.

remind the Earl of this great sorrow, and to bring before him arguments connecting Elizabeth and Hatton with the crime.

The irresponsible manner in which Northumberland had been accustomed to live in Paris rendered him peculiarly unfit to direct with skill the great landed and other interests thus suddenly committed to his charge. Sent from home at an early age, and encouraged to spend his money without let or hindrance, he knew practically nothing of the duties or economies of his station. Add to this that his return to England found him by turns moody or irascible, grieving constantly over his predecessor's fate, seeing spies and secret enemies in all around him, and it will be readily understood that not only Northumberland's mother, but the old stewards and retainers of the house, found him impossible to control and difficult to brook. Quarrels were frequent, particularly between mother and son (for the Earl taunted Lady Northumberland with lack of sympathy towards his father); and among those who refused to submit longer to the varying temper of this new lord was one whose services the house of Percy could ill afford to lose—old Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, for thirty years agent of the northern estates. Collingwood resigned his stewardship in February 1586;¹ and the Earl was imprudent enough to think that he could himself supply the place of such a man. The results were unfortunate, and Northumberland only succeeded in earning throughout his North Country domains the reputation of a spendthrift and a harsh landlord.² That he fully realised his failure may be gathered from certain comments made in the MS. volume, entitled *Instructions to my Son*, which he left after him.

"*I knewe not where I was or what I did,*" he writes, "*till out of my meanes of £3000 yearely, I had made shifte, in one yeare and a halfe, to be £15,000 in debt; so as the burden of my son, must still conclude ignorance in myne estate to be the mayn cause.*"³ Nor were matters bettered when he opened

¹ Collingwood to Anderson, February 11, 1586; *State Papers*.

² Sidney Lee in *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ *Instructions to my Son*.

up Alnwick Castle, the ancient stronghold of his race, and went to reside there; for he refused Border service, and took but scant interest in the sports and customs of the country. Even as the squires of Northumbria and Yorkshire distrusted his great-grandfather, the fifth Earl, because he preferred book and scrip to horn and spear, so now their descendants, or Protestant successors, did this latest and most learned Earl of the race. His loyalty to the established religion was also suspected among Northern Puritans. As time went on, however, his character as a territorial magnate somewhat improved, particularly in his relations with the poorer class of tenants. On November 24, 1593, he wrote to Fenwick, his chief constable at Alnwick, complaining that, owing to the negligence of his factors and clerks, the court rolls and records of his estates were "*not kept in due and honest sort, to the great confusion of . . . poor tenants' estates,*" and to his own "*great loss and dishonour.*"

Fenwick is warmly reproved for having evicted a certain widow from her farm, "*especially at a time when her Corn was still standing.*" This action, continues the Earl, "*was extream, and not according to the Customs of the country. . . . Wherefore I require that the old woman should be reinstated to her former estate.*"¹

Northumberland soon gave up the attempt to act as his own chief steward, and returned to his old Parisian pursuits. The library of his great-grandfather had long been scattered, but he set about forming another and larger one at his town-house in Blackfriars. The works of Macchiavelli, Guicciardini and many others were purchased; and the charges for binding and cataloguing the Earl's books grew heavier every year. His studies were multifarious, including architecture, archæology, gardening, geography, military and political science, astronomy, alchemy and astrology; but to the two last-named subjects he was still peculiarly addicted, and a superstitious age called him "Wizard" because of his alembics, "speculative glasses," and reputed knowledge of the occult. Unfortu-

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

nately another taste acquired in France, that of gambling, still held sway over his nature. During the year 1586 alone he lost about £1000 at cards and dice to Sir Walter Raleigh and other rufflers of the court.¹ But if Raleigh won the Earl's money, he repaid him to some extent by introducing into his life that which afterwards became one of its chief solaces—the use of tobacco. Northumberland was one of those men clearly intended by nature to be a smoker of the Indian herb. His hasty temper was soothed or his wits stimulated by its influence; and during the monotonous days of his captivity, he found it a constant and agreeable companion. After 1586 we find him buying quantities of tobacco from the Virginian merchants, and he possessed scores of pipes, some of them made from his own designing.²

Allusion has been made to the differences of opinion which arose between the young Earl and his mother.

A family quarrel; and a romance. Lady Northumberland had seen but little of her first-born since his boyhood, and was vastly disappointed to find in the returned wanderer a haughty nobleman, impatient of rebuke, and in intellect matured beyond his years. No doubt the good dame had looked forward to some few seasons more of undisputed sway over Petworth and the other houses and estates which her late husband had confided to her care when he passed through Traitor's Gate. With this prospect in view she had chosen as her auditor and receiver, Master Francis Fitton, a mild-mannered and presentable bachelor, whose father had filled similar household posts under the eighth Earl, and who was, in fact, a near relative of the family.³ But Lady Northumberland soon found that her

¹ *Syon House MSS. Rolls.* In the same year he lost twenty shillings to the Earl of Rutland over a game of chess.

² *Syon House MSS. Rolls.*

³ One of the daughters of Sir Guiscard Harbottel of Beamish was mother of the seventh and eighth Earls, while another married one Fitton, a gentleman of Cheshire. This latter was father of the above Francis Fitton, afterwards of Binfield in Berkshire, who was thus a cousin of the ninth Earl. Fitton's father had compiled an exhaustive summary of the Northumberland revenues.

rule was at an end, and that only a dowager's rights were left to her. Moreover, her son cast anything but a favourable eye upon his cousin, Master Fitton, whom he accused (and with justice, as afterwards appeared) of entertaining designs upon the jointure and hand of the widowed Countess. It is a common thing for sons to dislike those whom they suspect of plotting to fill their father's shoes; and young Northumberland was not only of a headstrong temperament, but also devoted to the memory of his father. Little wonder, therefore, that relations grow more and more strained between the Earl on the one hand and the Countess and her auditor on the other. Northumberland's brothers were all away from home; but of his two sisters, the elder, Lucy, sided with him against their mother. This internal revolt was too much for Lady Northumberland, who moved to a suburban residence of her own near St. Martin's Church, the Lady Lucy, like a dutiful daughter, accompanying her. But even in this removal Northumberland found a new grievance; for he alleged that his mother had furnished her new home with furniture taken illegally from Petworth and Blackfriars. This is what he alludes to in his *Instructions*, when he says, "*Wyves commonly are great scratchers after their husband's death, if things be loose.*"¹ He confined himself to complaints, however, and made no effort to recover the valuables thus appropriated. But the Countess was not so forbearing, and made several attempts to see Lord Burghley for the purpose of pouring her woes into his ear. But Burghley had not been for thirty years a statesman without learning the inadvisability of embroiling himself in family quarrels; so that the angry and anxious lady failed to obtain the desired interview. Not to be defeated, however, she addressed the minister in a long letter, describing the manifold sins and shortcomings of her son. The handwriting of this epistle seems that of a man, and it is possible that it was written from Lady Northumberland's dictation by the aforesaid Master Francis Fitton. It will be seen that her Ladyship had now an additional and

¹ *Instructions to my Son.*

grievous trouble (which, like the rest, she blamed upon the Earl);—to wit, the attachment which her elder daughter, the wilful Lucy, had formed for John Wotton,¹ a gallant of the court, and Northumberland's bosom friend. To this incipient love affair the Countess opposed herself tooth and nail; but maternal disapproval of the match is surely no excuse for the venom with which she attacks the unconscious Wotton, who, so far from being the mercenary debauchee here described, was a young man of unblemished honour and good birth, whose addresses to Lucy Percy were fostered and encouraged by that lady's brother. Nor was Wotton "more than double" the age of her whose affection he had gained; at the most his years could not have exceeded thirty.

This, then, is the letter of complaint which Burghley was unable to avoid:—

"My good Lord, I was twise to waite vppon your Lordship at yo^r Howse, but could not finde yo^r Lp. at home; whereby I am enforced to complaine vnto you in writinge my great Disquiett and Discomfort. I have longe seene the disordered Lif of my Sonne the Earl, and, asmuch as a Mother might out of whose rule he knewe himself, pswaded the Amendment. But nowe, pceavinge to my great Greif that he regardeth neither Parent, Frende, nor Kinsman, and lacketh Grace to governe himself like one of his callinge, I make vnto yo^r Lp. my most humble Request that it maie please yo^r Lp. to be well enformed of his mann^r of Lif, and nowe of his Behavio^r towards me, that when I shall offer the same to the wholle Councell, yo^r Lp. maie be the redier to iudge and see Redresse of the Wronge and Disgrace he hath don me, and to take some course for correcting his mispendinge and misordered Lif, soe as he might hereafter be able to serve the Quenes Ma^{ty}, and his Countrey; and that I may be put in better Assurance of Quiett in myne owne Howse, growing into Yeres and Sicklines. My Sonne hath taken to his speciall Companion Mr. John

¹ Afterwards Sir John Wotton, Knt.

*Wotton, not with standeinge he had knowen before his enter-
teyninge of his Sister, my eldest Daughter, in Love and
Follies, whereof six or seaven monethes since I warned him
againe by my lres, whereunto he made a short and slaught
Aunsweare. Within theis fewe Daies by dilligent Care had
of this Enterteynement of Love, not Love but his desier and
hope to gett Money by the gettinge of her, a lre was intercepted,
wherein appeared there had ben practise to entice my Daughter
to an Assurance, and since, by the ptie about whome the letter
was taken, confessed, that she should have ben pswaded in
some eveninge downe to the Gate, and there before two Gentle-
men fitt for such a Councell contracted unto Mr. Wotton, a
man of noe Livinge, of evill Name, and more than double my
Daughters Yeres. Yet the Plott went further, howe by meanes
of some highlie in the quenes favor I should be forced (the
Contract beinge once past,) to geve him two or three Thousande
Pounds with her. Whereof he beinge disapointed by the Dis-
cou'ie of this lre, he hath threatened Revenge vppon my
Servaunts, and namelie vppon my Steward, who openlie in
Pawles he reviled, and threatned to thrust his Dagger in him
had he ben out of the Church. The next daie followinge this
Behavio' of Mr. Wottons, cometh my Sonne (after he and
Mr. Wotton had supped at Arrundells¹ together) to my Howse,
and p'tendinge for Curtesie to see me, tarryinge a smalle while,
and vsinge almost noe Words to my self, he departed. On
whome, nowe, as he accustomed, my Cosen Frauncis Fitton
(his fathers Cosen Jermaine, and chief Dealer in matters of
his livinge, as still he is for me), wayted on him downe into
the Hall, where, without any cause, knowne or worde spoken,
he drew his Rapier (which he seldome useth to carry, but of
purpose that night) and strake at him, beinge in his Night
Gowne, amased at the matter, cutt his Head, and brake the
Rapier vppon his Arme, havinge nothinge to defende his life
withall but his handes, till at length some of my Servantts
rescued him. Since wth nights Behavio', beinge Saturdaie last,
he hath come by my Gate wth Mr. Wotton, and in scorne asked
for Mr. Fitton, bravinge and storminge the rest of my Servants*

¹ The townhouse of the Earl of Arundel.

that attended at my Gate. And after Supper cominge by, caused a Page to rapp at the Gate, asking in more scornes whether he might come in or noe.

"This hath ben my Sonnes and his Companions behavio^r iustly and truly sett downe, and the cause of it (I saie) onelie this matter and Quarrell of Wotton to my men, and to my kinsman Mr. Fitton, whome he suspected did my Comandement in takinge of a badd Boy (who once served me) the Carrier of these l^{ies} betwene him and my Daughter; for in all his Lif my Cosen Fitton hath never offended my Sonne that ever he or I can tell of. Nowe humblie I beseech yo^r Lp. to consider the Wronge that this Wotton hath gon aboute to doe me, the Howse, and my vnfortunate Daughter, nowe to my Servants; and next the Vnnaturalnes of my Sonne takinge his newe Companions part against his owne Mother, whose Lief belike he desires to shorten with Greif if he cannot doe it otherwise, and howe unkinde and undiscrett he is to be content to cast awaie his Sister into Beggerie and Want, to please his newe Acquaintaunce. Hopinge y^t for the Howse sake (though it hath ben vnfortunate) as for co^mmon Example of outrageous Misorder, and Contempt of me his Mother, your Lp. and the rest of my Lords, when I shall exhibitt my Petic^on, will take some Order w^h maie in tyme to come be good for him, yf euer he will be good. Thus even hartely greved I take my leave of yo^r Lp. From my Howse in St. Martyns, this ffifte of December 1587.

"Yo^r Lp. assured frende,

"K. NORTHUMBERLAND.

"I had forgotten to declare vnto yo^r Lordship howe on Sundaie last came to my Howse diu^s Citizens of good will, warninge my Folkes to beware of Cominge forth of my Howse, for that the Streets were laid by Mr. Wotton, and namely for Legg my Steward. And within lesse than half an Hower came one Forrest, a man of my Sonnes, into my Howse, gevinge Warninge that this Legg, my man should not goe forth to waite upon me, for that Streates were laid for him by Mr. Wotton, his Men and Frendes."

Lady Northumberland, it will be noticed, says nothing whatever of the more or less tender feelings which existed between herself and the Master Francis Fitton thus ignominiously thrashed with her son's rapier; nor does she admit the probability that this thrashing and the Earl's subsequent scornful words were caused by the latter's knowledge that his mother meditated a marriage with her man of affairs at the very time that she railed against Lucy Percy's love for John Wotton.¹ But old Burghley, who knew most things concerning the English society of his day, was probably well aware of the true condition of affairs, and acted accordingly. At any rate, the wrathful Countess did not, so far as is known, succeed in airing her troubles before "*the wholle Councell*"; and the happy settlement of this troublesome business leads us to believe that the crafty Cecil may himself have taken a hand in it. For both quarrel and romance were brought to an agreeable conclusion. John Wotton was knighted by the Queen, and in a little while married Lady Lucy Percy, without being driven to "*lay the streates*" for the purpose of carrying her off. The young Earl was induced to seek an outlet for his fiery spirit in the Low Countries; whither he went with a handsome train to serve as a volunteer under Leicester against the Spaniards. Lastly, the Countess was, presumably, made happy by being wedded to the man of her choice; and mild Francis Fitton found her Ladyship's large private fortune a serviceable salve for the blows which he had received from his hot-tempered stepson. The Earl's near neighbour at Blackfriars, Master William Shakespeare, might well have turned the whole story into a diverting comedy.

When the execution of Mary Queen of Scots led to war with Spain, and Philip sent his vast fleet to harry these shores, young Northumberland was one of those patriotic peers who shamed the sordid parsimony of Elizabeth, and the perilous inactivity of her ministers, by fitting forth ships at their own expense, raising companies of volunteers, and expending large

"Mounted on
Fortune's
Wheel."

¹ *State Papers.*

sums for the fortification of the coast and the defence of the nation. "A great many of the young nobility and gentry," says Nichols,¹ "entered themselves as volunteers in the navy, hired ships at their own expense, and from a zeal to serve their country joined in the grand fleet in vast numbers—among which were the Earls of Oxford, Northumberland, and Cumberland." These private exertions, combined with the fury of the elements, were the real saving of England in that time of danger. Northumberland and his associates followed up their disinterested conduct by advancing many thousands of pounds to Raleigh and the other fathers of the British navy, and thus made possible the long sea war which followed the failure of the Armada.

If the Queen was loath to part with any of her hoarded gains, she proved as eager as ever to add to them; and the Earl very wisely adopted his father's policy of placating her Majesty by frequent and costly gifts. The Calendar of State Papers from this time until the date of Elizabeth's death contains regular entries of New Year presents given by Northumberland to his sovereign. In January 1589 his offering consisted of "*one jewel of golde like a lampe, garnessed with diamonds, and one opal*;" but his later tokens of loyalty were far more costly than this. The Queen regarded him as favourably as she had once done his father; and in 1591 he was restored to the latter's forfeited post as Governor of Tynemouth Castle. On April 23, 1593, the same chapel of Windsor Castle which, twenty-three years before, had witnessed his uncle's shameful degradation from the dignity of the Garter, now saw the ninth Earl of Northumberland installed a knight of that order with due pomp and ceremony. The dramatist, George Peele, turned this event to account by publishing a series of verses entitled *The Honour of the Garter*, which he dedicated to the new knight in the fulsome phraseology of the literary man of the period seeking

¹ *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. ii.

a patron. In the verses themselves the Earl was thus apostrophised:—

“ Young Northumberland,
Mounted on Fortune's wheel by Virtue's aim,
Become thy badge, as it becometh thee !
Leaving our schoolmen's vulgar trodden paths,
And following the ancient reverend steps
Of Trismegistus and Pythagoras,
Thro' uncouth ways and inaccessible,
Dost pass into the spacious pleasant fields
Of divine Science and Philosophy ! ”

Northumberland does not appear to have looked upon this production as a masterpiece of genius, if we are to judge by the manner in which he rewarded the author. The Earl's House Rolls, now preserved in Syon House, contain the following order :—“ *Deliver to Mr. Warnour, at my Lord's appointment, to give to one George Peel, a poett, as my Lord's liberalitie, £3.* ” It is likely, however, that “ *my Lord's liberalitie* ” sufficed for at least one merry night at the “ Mermaid,” the “ Devil,” or any of the taverns where Peele was wont to spend his scanty gains with Jonson and the rest ; so that some lines of true poetry may have come out of *The Honour of the Garter* after all.

In 1590 the Earl had moved his town residence from Blackfriars to Russell House, St. Martins-in-the-Fields, “ at a little distance beyond Charing Cross.” This mansion he rented for £60 per annum. He also possessed a small villa in the hamlet of Barking, where he frequently entertained Raleigh, Drake, and other sea-captains whose vessels were anchored in the river hard by. His great country estates he now seldom visited, for he found it impossible to transport hither and thither the books and scientific instruments among which he loved to spend his time. This neglect caused discontent, and even more serious troubles, among his tenantry, particularly at Petworth—which place he loved least of all his houses, perhaps because it had been for years practically the prison of his father. With the Sussex folk he had waged a species of feud which lasted from the

beginning of 1592 until 1595, or even later. The tenantry periodically mustered in force, and, under cover of darkness, pulled down the fences and other enclosures which the servants of the manorial lord had erected. When Northumberland's bailiffs retaliated, the malcontents shut off the water supply of the estate.¹ He was somewhat comforted for these annoyances when, in consequence of his petition to that end, the Queen exempted his estate from liability for the unpaid balance of that fine of £5000 imposed upon the eighth Earl by the Star Chamber in 1572.² Perhaps the court favour which he clearly enjoyed led the Catholic party at this time to bring forward the old proposal of an alliance between Northumberland and the Lady Arabella Stuart; perhaps that dangerous subject was broached by those jealous of his growing power and influence. It is certain that rumours of such a marriage were bruited abroad, and speedily reached the ears of the Queen and Council. The succession to the throne was a grave problem to all thinking persons. Elizabeth had chosen no successor, nor would she in any way allow the rights of the King of Scots, James VI., to be regarded as heir. Arabella Stuart stood next to James in order of inheritance, and was now in her nineteenth year. It appears that Northumberland was by no means averse to the advantages to be gained by so illustrious a union, and his Catholic friends, both at home and on the Continent, encouraged him to offer his hand to the Lady Arabella, and even to carry her off, if such violent measures became necessary.³ The Earl's own descent from the House of York placed him at least seventh in the order of succession (only James of Scotland,⁴ Arabella Stuart,⁴ Lord Beauchamp,⁵ Lord Henry Seymour,⁵ the Earl of Derby,⁵ and

¹ Northumberland to Sir John Pickering, Lord Keeper, June 29, 1592; and again Nov. 8, 1594: *Harleian MSS.*, Nos. 6995 and 6996.

² The balance of the fine was remitted in December 1594.

³ *Original State Papers (Domestic Series, Eliz. v. 235)*.

⁴ Both descended from Margaret, first sister of Henry VIII.

⁵ Descended from Mary, second sister of Henry VIII.

the Earl of Huntingdon¹ standing between him and the position of legitimate heir to the throne of England; but some of his more ardent supporters went so far as to revive for his benefit the old tale to the effect that Edmund "Crouchback,"² Earl of Lancaster, was the elder, rather than the younger brother of Edward I.; which, if it had been true, would have set aside the rights of both Tudor and Stuart, and after the Houses of Spain and Portugal (the members of which could, of course, never succeed), and the banished and outlawed Earl of Westmoreland, made Northumberland *de jure* sovereign of England. The project of settling the crown upon the Lady Arabella, and marrying her to Northumberland, was well received in England,—so well, indeed, that Elizabeth's jealousy caught fire, and she decided to put a stop to the affair before it went any further.

Arabella Stuart was at once imprisoned, or at least "placed under close restraint," while the Queen hastened to procure for Northumberland a wife less liable to involve him in dangerous designs. So eager was the royal match-maker in this quest that she apparently overlooked the important matter of suitability altogether, and chose for the Earl a consort wholly unfitted to fill that position. There is even a serious doubt whether Lady Dorothy Devereux, otherwise Perrott (the person thus rashly selected), was free to enter into the bonds of matrimony; for, in the words of a contemporary, she was "*nor maid, nor wife, nor yet widowe.*" Her first husband, Sir Thomas Perrott, was still living, and no record exists to show that their union had ever been set aside. Young as she was, her name had already been made notorious by the tongue of scandal, and she had been subjected to a public affront by the very sovereign who now

¹ Descended from George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.

² Edmund "Crouchback" was actually born in 1245, six years after Edward I. The story of his having been set aside on account of deformity was probably an invention of the Lancastrian Princes, who derived from him through Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt. His eldest grand-daughter, Mary, married Henry, Lord Percy, and was mother of the first Earl of Northumberland.

wished to make her Countess of Northumberland. She had no dowry, save that of beauty and birth; and the ungovernable temper with which she was cursed made it extremely improbable that she could live in peace with Northumberland—himself by no means of a placid disposition.

But the strange history and equally strange character of the future Countess deserve a more extended notice.

Dorothy Devereux was born at Chartley in Staffordshire, about the year 1565, the second daughter of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex, by his wife Lettice Knollys. Believers in heredity may find the best excuse for Lady Dorothy's faults and follies in the nature of the stock from which she sprang. Her father was of mixed Norman and Cymbric descent, the representative of more than one race long settled upon the Welsh Marches.¹ A brave, though unskilful soldier, he became, when blinded by rage, bloodthirsty and even treacherous.² He squandered most of his great fortune in a futile attempt to reconquer the North of Ireland, and would probably have utterly ruined himself and his children in the same cause, but for his early death in 1576.³ From him Lady Dorothy (as well as her brother, the second Earl of Essex) inherited neither prudence nor tranquillity of temper. Other phases of her character are traceable to her mother, Lettice Knollys. This remarkable woman is

¹ In addition to being the heir of the old house of Devereux of Hereford, he also represented the families of Bouchier, Earls of Essex, and Ferrers of Chartley, besides tracing his descent through several strains to the ancient princes of Wales. He is said to have boasted to Sir Brian O'Neill that he "possessed no drop of Saxon blood."

² He was directly responsible for the brutal massacre of the Scoto-Irish of Rathlin in July 1575 (a deed of blood condemned by so partial a historian as Froude), for the massacre of Ards in Down, and for the slaughter of his Irish guests at the banquet to which he had invited them in Belfast, October 1574. These, and other cruel and perfidious acts, are said to have been committed in the heat of passion.

³ He died at Dublin in 1576, it is said by poison administered by Leicester's agents.

accused of having been engaged in an adulterous intrigue with the Earl of Leicester during her husband's lifetime.¹ She was certainly at Kenilworth with Leicester in 1575,² and she became his wife with almost indecent haste after the death of Essex. She was subsequently married, for the third time, to Sir Christopher Blount, and died at the great age of ninety-four on Christmas Day 1634. It is worthy of note that her grandmother was Mary Boleyn, stated to have been one of Henry VIII.'s mistresses,³ and sister of Queen Anne Boleyn.⁴ Lettice Knollys was thus nearly related to Elizabeth.

As to Robert, Earl of Essex, brother of the future Lady Northumberland, his reckless and inflammable temperament bore no slight resemblance to that of his sister; and those familiar with his history will remember the character given him by Elizabeth when he was wounded in a duel with Charles Blount—a character which might have been applied with equal force to Lady Dorothy Devereux. "*By God's death,*" swore the Queen, "*it were fitting that some one should take Essex down and teach him better manners, or there were no rule with him!*" It will be remembered that the Earl's bitter words on one occasion goaded Elizabeth into boxing his ears.

Another member of this remarkable family was Lady Penelope Devereux (elder sister of Lady Dorothy), who openly defied the received laws of morality in order to follow the dictates of her heart. In early life she had met and loved Charles Blount, then a younger son of Lord Mountjoy. Blount's empty purse, and the comparative poverty in which the first Essex had left his children, precluded all hope of a union at that time, and Lady Penelope was induced to bestow her hand upon Robert, third Lord

¹ In Parsons' *Leicester's Commonwealth*, Leicester is accused of having procured the poisoning of Essex in order to enjoy undisputed possession of the latter's wife. The familiar *Ballad of Leicester's Ghost* makes a similar accusation.

² Essex was then absent in Ireland.

³ See that king's own statement under the account of Anne Boleyn's trial.

⁴ Mary Boleyn, by her husband William Carey (or, as some have it, by Henry VIII.), was mother of Katherine Carey, wife of Sir Francis Knollys.

Rich, afterwards Earl of Warwick. Presently, however, when Blount succeeded to the barony and estates of Mountjoy, Lady Rich fled from her husband's house, and became the mistress of her former lover.¹ She had an illegitimate family of five children by Mountjoy. One of these was afterwards created first Baron Mountjoy and Earl of Newport, owing to the fact that he had married a niece of the favourite, Buckingham. Eventually Lady Rich was divorced from her husband, and married to Mountjoy, but she left by the latter no legitimate offspring.²

So much for the immediate relatives of Lady Dorothy Devereux.³ She herself soon proved as reckless and difficult of restraint as either her brother or her sister. Leicester soon grew weary of playing step-father to one so unmanageable, and banished her to the household of the Queen's Cofferer, Master Henry Cock.⁴ Cock sent his difficult charge to the Manor of Broxbourne in Hertfordshire, some sixteen miles to the north of London, where it was hoped she would be sufficiently far removed from the temptations of town. But even in this secluded country parish Lady Dorothy contrived to follow her mother's and her sister's example by becoming the heroine of a romantic love-affair. In July 1583, when barely eighteen, she eloped with Sir Thomas Perrott, a man of thirty-two, and was married to him under very curious circumstances.

Thomas Perrott was son of that stout old soldier, Sir John Perrott, Lord Deputy of Ireland, who was in his turn a natural son of Henry VIII.⁵ Young Perrott had

¹ Sinclair, *More Percy Anecdotes, Old and New*.

² *Ibid.*

³ There was one other reputed child of Walter, first Earl of Essex—Sir Charles Devereux, killed in a skirmish before Rouen, 1591. He was by some declared to be a natural son of Leicester by Lady Essex.

⁴ Henry Cock was Sheriff of Herts in 1575, and received the honour of knighthood in 1589. The estate of Broxbourne (formerly monastic land) has long passed out of the Cock family.

⁵ By "the Fair Thyamis" (as Spenser called her in *The Faëry Queen*), Mary Berkeley, wife of Thomas Perrott of Haroldston. Old Sir John Perrott was (like the eighth Earl of Northumberland) persecuted by Sir Christopher Hatton, whom he called his "frisking adversary." He died in the Tower, September 1592.

served under his father with considerable distinction, and in 1578 was knighted at Waterford by Lord Justice Drury. How, or where, he first met Lady Dorothy is unknown; but some sort of understanding must have been come to between them, for in July 1583, when Perrott rode to Broxbourne with a band of armed friends (veterans like himself of the Irish wars), the fair ward of Master Cock awaited the party at the door of the parish church, and declared her readiness to wed Sir Thomas in defiance of friends and kindred. A special licence had been obtained through the office of the Bishop of London; and efforts were afterwards made to prove it irregular. It is, nevertheless, duly recorded as follows:—

*“ Thomas Perott gen. and Dorothy
Devorax spinster of the City
of London, on 17 July, 1583.”*¹

Strype, Bishop of London, with his chancellor and other officers, were afterwards brought before the Privy Council and censured for issuing a licence without full inquiry into the condition and circumstances of the parties. The evidence regarding the actual marriage ceremony, elicited at the time, is as follows:—

“ The stolen Match of the Lady Dorothy Devereux with Sir Thomas Parrot. That unequal Mariage, for the solemnizing whereof a Licence was obtained out of the Bishop's Faculty-Office, was mentioned to have been complained of at Court, and occasioned Blame to the Bishop. The Particulars of it omitted in the History,² were as follow. The Parties were Sir Thomas Parrot, and the Lady Dorothy Devereux, Daughter to the Earl of Essex, of right Noble and antient Blood: which Lady at that Time lived with Sir Henry Cock Kt. in the Parish of Broxburn in Hertfordshire.³ Where getting into the Parish Church, they were married by a

¹ London Marriage Licenses, 1521–1869; edited by Joseph Foster, from excerpts by Col. Chester, D.C.L.

² *i.e.*, in the *Life of Bishop Aylmer* by Strype, from the supplement of which work these facts are taken.

³ Cock was not knighted, however, at the time of the stolen marriage.

strange Minister, whom they procured, two Men guarding the Church Door with their Swords and Daggers under their Cloaks, as the rest of the Company had, to the number of five or six. One Green was then Vicar of the Parish,¹ to whom that Morning repaired two Persons. One of them told him, that he was a Minister and a Batchelour of Divinity, and had been a Preacher of long Time; and asked him for the Key of the Church Door, which must be opened to him, for he had a Commission, whereupon he was to examine certain Men, and to swear them. And therefore asked him also for the Communion Book. The Vicar told him it was locked up in the Vestry, and he could not come by it. But instead thereof he offered him a Latin Testament. But the other said that would not serve his Turn. Coming to the Church, he found it open, and Sir Thomas and the Lady ready to enter in; who hindred him by any means from shutting it. But perceiving that they meant to proceed to a Mariage, he persuaded the strange Minister not to deal herein, wondering how he would intrude himself into his [the Vicar's] charge; and then offered to him an Injunction against it; and began to read it unto them.² . . . But they refused to hear it; and the strange Minister (whose name was Lewis) told the Vicar he had sufficient Authority, shewing him a Licence under Seal; which the Vicar offered to read: but before he had read half of it, Sir Thomas snatched it away from him, and offered him a Ryal to marry him. But he refusing, Sir Thomas bad the other go forward. But the Vicar, when the other began to read, resisted him, and shut the Book. Whereupon Sir Thomas thrust him away, and told him he had nothing to do therewith, and that he should answer it for resisting my Lord Bishop's Authority. And one Godolphin, one of Sir Thomas's Party, took him up, and told him he shewed himself malicious. Whereupon after once more forbidding him, he held his Peace. Edmund Lucy Esq., one that lived in Sir Henry Cock's

¹ William Greene was vicar of Broxbourne from 1580 to 1583. In consequence of the scandal arising out of this affair he resigned the living in the latter year.

² The terms of this Injunction, forbidding clergymen to solemnise marriages save in their own parishes, and when fully satisfied as to the legality of the ceremony, is here quoted at length.

*Family*¹ together with the Lady Dorothy, coming in, plucked away the Book from the Minister. Who told him he should answer it, and was in danger of a Premunire for resisting the Bishop's Authority; and so he went forward with his Office without the Surplice, in his Cloak with his riding Boots and Spurs; and dispatched it hastily.

"This soon came to the Court: and She being a Daughter of one of the antient Noblesse (tho' she her self was in the Plot), gave great Offence; and Sir Henry Cock being a Justice of Peace was commanded to take the Examination of the Matter, and send it up. And in fine the Bishop of London underwent much blame for his Faculties."²

The Parish Registers of Broxbourne at present date only from 1688;³ so that there is no means of knowing whether or not the marriage of Sir Thomas Perrott and Lady Dorothy was duly entered. As for Bishop Aylmer, he was called to account for "*too hastily and negligently granting Licenses for marriage, without due Examination concerning the consent of the Parents, Guardians and Friends of the Parties to be married. The Occasion whereof was that in July 1583, some Noble Person's Son or Daughter was matched unequally and unhappily by means of one of these Licenses. Whereupon the . . . Officer, named Mr. Blackwel, was sent for by a Warrant from the Lord Treasurer, to appear before the Council, to examine him about granting this License. But both he and D^r Stanhop, the Bishop's Chancellor, protested they neither knew nor heard of the Fault till the Lord Treasurer's Warrant came. Whose Charge they confest it was, if they had been present to have lookt unto it. The Bishop himself was also sent for to the Council, where he was twitted for his Licenses; tho' if there were any Fault committed in this Particular, the Blame lay in his Officers, not in him.*"⁴

¹ Afterwards Sir Edmund Lucy, Kt. He married Frances, elder daughter and co-heir of Sir Henry Cock of Broxbourne.

² Strype's *Life of Bishop Aylmer* (Supplement), p. 327.

³ Cussan's *Hertfordshire*. A former clerk of the parish coolly appropriated the more ancient volumes, and cut the pages up "into slips for measures"!

⁴ Strype's *Life of Bishop Aylmer*, p. 197.

In spite of opposition from the Council and examinations by Justices of the Peace, Sir Thomas Perrott carried off his newly made bride in triumph—the eight gentlemen “*with their Swords and Daggers under their Cloaks*” probably proving sufficient to prevent any interference on the part of the people of Broxbourne. There is no record of the marriage having been pronounced null and void; indeed we may assume that such was not the case, from the fact that long subsequently (in 1603) Lady Northumberland was granted portion of the money settled upon her by “her former husband, Sir Thomas Perrott.”¹ They lived together in London and elsewhere for about four years,² during which time two children were born to them. A separation then took place, but no evidence can be discovered of any divorce. Perhaps they looked upon their union as irregular and invalid, and therefore believed no divorce necessary. “The usual statement,” says Sinclair,³ “is that *after Sir Thomas's death*, she (Lady Perrott) married her second husband (the Earl of Northumberland).”⁴ But that is glaringly incorrect, as she must have been married to the Earl about 1594, and Sir Thomas lived until 1611.”

The entire circumstances surrounding Lady Dorothy's separation from Perrott, and second marriage, are mysterious. In 1591 Sir Thomas succeeded Sir George Carew as Master of the Ordnance; and in 1592 he made a will settling considerable sums upon his wife and his “*two littell children by her*” then living. His father's persecution at the hands of Hatton had, however, led to the loss of the family estates,⁵ and the younger Perrott went to mend his fortunes by serving in the Netherlands. In process of

¹ *Domestic State Papers, James I.*

² She had left him in July 1587, when, as will be seen, the Queen publicly insulted her at North Hall.

³ *More Percy Anecdotes, Old and New.*

⁴ This statement is, in fact, accepted as true by most historians of the Peerage. Burke describes Lady Dorothy as “widow of Sir Thomas Perrott.”

⁵ Old Sir John Perrott died in the Tower, September 1592. Evidence of the manner in which Sir Christopher Hatton influenced the Queen against him may be found in the *Calendar of State Papers, Elizabeth* (Addenda).

time, some portion of the forfeited lands were restored to him. The exact date and place of his death are unknown, but Sinclair's statement to the effect that he lived into the reign of James I. is probably correct. He certainly survived his wife's second marriage to Northumberland. Of one of his two children by her there is no account. The second, Penelope Perrott, described as his "sole heir," married firstly Sir William Gower, Kt., and secondly Sir Robert Naunton, Kt.¹

Whether Lady Perrott's violent temper led to a separation, or whether (as before suggested) they had come to look upon their marriage as not binding, Sir Thomas and his wife parted by mutual consent about the beginning of 1587. The star of the young Earl of Essex was now rapidly eclipsing that of Raleigh at Court, and the Queen found herself unable to remain long apart from her latest minion. Lady Dorothy, between whom and her brother there existed a tender attachment, went to join the latter at North Hall, the seat of Lord Warwick. In July 1587 Elizabeth visited North Hall, and hearing of Lady Dorothy's presence there, expressed her displeasure in no measured terms, positively refusing to receive her. It is amusing to find a sovereign of Elizabeth's reputation playing the prude under such circumstances, and affecting to be shocked at the proximity of one whose worst faults were a clandestine marriage and a separation from her husband. Essex was supremely disgusted at the royal attitude, and remonstrated with Elizabeth for insulting his sister, and, through her, the honour of his house. This he declared had been done to please "*that knave Raleigh*." Bitter recriminations followed. Eventually, about midnight, Essex left North Hall in company with his sister, and took the road to Theobalds, the home of Burghley. Next day he hurried to Sandwich with the intention of sailing for Holland, and would probably have carried his design into effect, had not Elizabeth despatched Sir Robert Carey

¹ Craik, *Romance of the Peerage*. See also Herald and Genealogist, vol. viii. pp. 314-24.

in hot haste to bring him back. A reconciliation was effected, and, rather than lose her favourite, Elizabeth consented to extend some slight favour to his sister, Lady Dorothy.

With the attainder and death in the Tower of Sir John Perrott, the fortune settled by his son and heir upon Lady Dorothy Devereux was held by the lawyers to have become confiscate to the Crown. Being without means, however, Lady Dorothy sued for this money, and the Queen (anxious to see her married to the Earl of Northumberland) was now willing to forego the Crown claims in her favour. Burghley and Attorney-General Coke, however, advanced other reasons for withholding the lady's settlements. The alleged irregularity of her marriage was probably one of the points upon which Burghley and Attorney-General Coke (her chief opponents) took their stand. Long and costly litigation was the result, which was only stopped by Northumberland (who had in the meantime married Lady Dorothy) refusing to loosen his purse-strings any further for the prosecution of an apparently fruitless case. Lady Northumberland then had recourse to petitions, varied by personal abuse of Burghley, Coke, and even of her husband. In the end the Queen, utterly wearied by her importunities, granted her a pension of £400 *per annum*, to take the place of the Perrott settlements, and enable her to bring up her daughter by Sir Thomas.¹

Northumberland's honeymoon was disturbed by news of trouble upon his Border estates. In December 1595 Lord Eure, Warden of the Middle Marches, reported that a few days previously a large hosting of "*Burnes, Youngs and Mowes, with xxvij. horses*" came to Rugley,² one of the Earl's "towns," and raided the neighbourhood. Eure complained that Sir John Forster and others of the Puritan leaders could have

¹ *Pat. and Close Rolls, Elizabeth.* This pension was afterwards revoked when, in 1603, Lady Northumberland renewed her suit with success.

² A small village about two miles south of Alnwick, under Aydon Forest.

prevented this and similar raids, but did not choose to do so. Although the "common bell" was rung in Alnwick, and Sir John Forster was present in the town with a large force, no attempt had been made to help the Earl's tenants, or to pursue the freebooters. Sir John Forster was the former lessee and receiver of the forfeited Percy estates under the Crown ; which fact may help to explain his conduct on this occasion. He it was also who had acted as the seventh Earl's gaoler and custodian during that nobleman's last sad journey to York. Lord Eure's suspicion that Forster did not desire to protect Northumberland's tenants is borne out by the information that, within a week after the first raid, the Youngs boldly returned to the Alnwick district with twenty-five horses, and spoiled several villages, sparing only the property of one Salkeld, a kinsman and follower of Sir John. On this occasion, as before, there was no pursuit of the daring marauders ; and Eure openly accuses Forster of conniving at both raids.¹

It is certain that the Puritan knight, although in command of considerable forces, remained inert at Alnwick, while hamlets and farmsteads for miles around were plundered and burnt. The entire county of Northumberland lay at the mercy of these ravaging outlaws ; the peasantry were houseless and almost starving. Nor did the condition of Cumberland and the Western Marches present a less gloomy picture. Elizabeth and Burghley had uprooted the old Catholic aristocracy from the soil, and placed the government of these regions in the hands of men like Forster, little respected by the people, and prevented by mutual suspicions and petty jealousy from keeping the peace of the Border-side. Lord Eure, alone of the Wardens, seems to have been actuated by any public spirit ; but even he admitted that while Forster and his fellows were allowed to rule as they listed, nothing could be done to suppress rapine and alleviate the sufferings of the people. This was at last realised by the Queen's ministers ; and they looked about for a warden general—some man whose dignity of birth and

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

natural capacities might entitle him to govern not only the Marches, but the March Wardens, Constables, and Captains as well. The first choice fell upon Northumberland, and to him this signal honour was offered. It is perhaps to be regretted, not only for the sake of the North Country, but for his own fame, that he did not accept. But in truth he loved too well his Court friends and courtly interests, his laboratory and his books, to leave them thus for the rough, perhaps thankless, service of the Border. Courage he had in plenty, as we shall see; it was personal prudence that deterred him. But midnight raids and noonday hangings; life in the saddle or in rude march-peels; conversation with men whose only science was the tracking of deer or outlaw, whose only literature was drawn from the ballads of some strolling harper—these things were not for the splendid Earl of Northumberland. Only yesterday he returned from buckling the Garter around the knee of King Henry of France of Navarre;¹ to-day he had an audience with her Majesty, and a merry Parisian tale for her private ear. Thence to the Globe, to hear Master Shakespeare's latest play; after which supper at one of the great houses in the Strand, with Raleigh's wild stories of adventure overseas, and a budget of half-treasonable gossip from Edinburgh or Antwerp to flavour the viands and add a zest to the wine! And when supper was done, perhaps a mysterious flitting by barge up the river to Mortlake, where Dr. John Dee² waited with furnace and crucible, "to conjure up the Devil" (so say the country folk) "for the Wizard Earl and his gay companions!" Such were the occupations to which Northumberland was devoted "in times of peace" (for, be it remembered, he did not consider the raidings and march-treasons of the Border in the light of war); and so he prayed

¹ Northumberland was sent by Elizabeth to carry the insignia of the Garter to Henry IV. in 1596; and had just returned from this mission when he was selected as Queen's Lieutenant on the Border.

² The English Nostradamus, who at this time resided chiefly at Mortlake. Northumberland and he were associated in many astrological and other experiments [Syon House MSS.]. Dee had been prosecuted for wizard-craft under Mary, and was still regarded by many as in league with Satan.

the Queen to hold him excused of serving her in this manner. "*The Borders are ill governed, and the Wardens threatened to be removed,*" writes Sir Robert Cecil to Lord Shrewsbury, "*because their Equality breeds Emulation and Contention : it was offered to the Earl of Northumberland to be Warden of the Myddle March and Lieutenant for the time . . . of the three shires ;*¹ . . . *but my Lord this conceipt hath spent, and we that love him, whom he hath ser-importuned to keepe him from it, have now delivered him from the Impositions with which he is very well contented ; and joys, I perceive, rather in his pryvate lyfe, than to be placed from it some where he doubts his Purse will be picked.*" The Earl's refusal caused grave disappointment among the ancient Catholic houses in the North that had survived the religious troubles and persecutions. These people had hoped for an era of peace and toleration under his rule ; instead of which they were condemned to a longer term of suffering, harried on the one side by religious exactions, and on the other by the unrestrained attacks of godless moss-riders.

Northumberland's creed had long been an object of suspicion to the advanced Protestants. He was known to have expressed disapproval of the bloody excesses committed by the elder Essex in Ireland under the banner of the Reformed Faith ; and his objection to command in the Border counties was explained by the zealots as due to a fear that he should be called upon to enforce the laws against Romanism. Protestant feeling against him grew still more bitter when it was discovered that he had refused to accept the mission to Henry IV. on behalf of the French Huguenots, although it was pressed upon him by the Queen. All the old stories of his relations with Charles Paget and the exiled Catholics were revived ; and he was accused of being a "secret Papist, and no friend to the Queen's Supremacy." So far as can be ascertained, Northumberland continued thoroughly loyal to the Established Faith. His position was practically that of the

¹ Northumberland, Cumberland, and Durham.

Anglican Catholics of to-day ; and while recognising Elizabeth as the head of the Church, he had little or no sympathy with the tenets of the Puritans.

It is impossible to say how far the Protestant outcry against him might have proceeded, had not the rumour of a second Armada given his enemies something else to think about. As on the previous occasion, Northumberland showed both his country and his niggardly Queen an admirable example in this threatened emergency. Entirely at his own expense, and assisted only by one of his brothers and two other friends, he raised a regiment of horse and fitted out two ships for defensive service. His reward was the rank of general of cavalry, bestowed upon him in August 1599.

Meanwhile the young Countess of Northumberland, thwarted on every side in her attempts to gain possession of the property settled upon her by Sir Thomas Perrott, had given full rein to her violent temper —furiously assailing all those whom she believed rightly or wrongly to have stood in her way. What possible reason the husband could have had for taking sides against his wife in this cause, it is hard to discover ; but Countess Dorothy chose to look upon him as an enemy almost from the beginning of their married life, and he it was who had to bear the brunt of her reproaches when Coke or Burghley prevailed against the pleading of her advocates. She wrote in abuse of Northumberland to the Queen ; she complained of his conduct wildly, incoherently, to the suave and mock-sympathetic Francis Bacon.¹ Now the Earl himself, far from being a patient man, was most easily roused to anger ; and it is not to be supposed that he listened in silence to the unfair denunciations of his consort, or allowed her to calumniate him at Court without stormy protest. In fact, the existence of this unhappy couple soon

Domestic
strife and
miseries.

¹ Birch, *Queen Elizabeth*.

became one of turbulence and animosity—a long series of frenzied quarrels, each one more bitter and more protracted than the last. Some idea of the wretched state of affairs which prevailed between them may be gleaned from the fact that the Earl and Countess were formally separated no less than four times during the first five years of their wedded life !

As if any new cause of discord between them were wanting, it was supplied by the intrigues of the young Earl of Essex, Lady Northumberland's brother. Brother and sister loved each other with all the ardour of their wild headstrong natures ;¹ and the Countess entered eagerly into the network of plots and counter-plots by which the sanguine Essex imagined he was playing the game of nations against trained hands like Robert Cecil.² Not only did Northumberland look upon his brother-in-law as "of slender qualities, a mere royal minion," but he had at the same time a great regard for Sir Walter Raleigh, between whom and his rival favourite Essex there existed a cordial hatred. When, therefore, Essex championed the claims of the Scottish king as heir to the throne, Northumberland found himself, naturally enough, in the opposite camp amongst those who refused to pledge their fealty to a foreigner of whose opinions they knew so little. Naturally, too, Lady Northumberland was all for the Stuart ; and when her husband taunted her with the stories then current reflecting upon the birth and character of James, she replied in terms which deserve reproduction if only to exemplify the bitterness of their disputes. The closing part of the dialogue was thus reported by Lord Henry Howard (who had the particulars from my lady herself, and therefore told her side of the story) :—

He (Northumberland) told his wife that he had rather the King of Scots were buried than crowned, and that both he and

¹ The courageous manner in which Essex had flouted the Queen herself, as a protest against his sister's treatment at North Hall, may be recalled.

² Essex House was said to rival the State Office in the number and extent of its sources of information.

all his friends would end their lives before her brother's great 'God' should reign in this element.

*"The lady told him again that, rather than any other than King James should reign in this place, she would eat their hearts in salt, though she were brought to the gallows instantly!"*¹

The strifes and separations of the pair soon became matter of common gossip, although at first the scandal was successfully concealed by the joint efforts of Northumberland and Essex. But when Essex left England on his ill-starred Irish expedition in 1599, Lady Northumberland's last restraint was removed, and thenceforward her frequent separations from the Earl were the talk of London. "*Yesternight*," wrote Roland White to Sir Robert Sidney on October 16 in that year, "*somewhat late, the Countess of Northumberland came to Essex House. A muttering there is that there is unkindness grown between her and the Earl, her husband, upon which they are parted.*"² We have seen how they quarrelled in 1601, and observed that the lady's promise to devour the hearts of her husband and his friends, should James VI. fail to win the throne, was duly reported to that doubtlessly gratified monarch. The incident occasioned a separation of six weeks.³ Again, on January 5, 1602, the Earl's secretary, Dudley Carleton, informs his correspondent, Chamberlain, that "*my Lord Northumberland is reconciled with his lady, for which he was a while in disgrace in higher place.*"⁴ This reconciliation was probably brought about by the approaching birth of an infant—afterwards Algernon, tenth Earl. The factious couple had already suffered the loss of four children—two sons and two daughters; and there was a mutual desire that an heir to the honours of Northumberland should come into the world at a time when his parents were at peace with each other. Syon House,⁵

¹ *Secret Correspondence with King James I.: Lord Henry Howard to Bruce.* Dec. 4, 1601.

² *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. p. 133.

³ *Howard's Letters.*

⁴ *State Papers.*

⁵ Some account of Syon, still one of the seats of the Percy family, will be found on pages 93-6.

a Crown property, was leased, and to these quiet surroundings, far from the noise of factions, Northumberland conveyed his wife, with many protestations of future tenderness. There too he remained even after the baby, the hoped-for boy, had seen the light. The Court gossips missed their usual *pabulum*, and those "in higher place" began to wonder if these mates, so often estranged, were at last in truth united. When lo ! one morning came the bruit that the old feud had broken forth afresh. To Chamberlain wrote Dudley Carleton in November :—" *I heard the Earl of Northumberland lives again apart from his lady, now she hath brought him an heir, which he said was the solder of their reconciliation. She lives at Sion with the child, being otherwise of a very melancholy spirit.*"¹

Much of Lady Northumberland's "melancholy spirit" may have been due to her own and her husband's inability to keep the good resolutions which they had made before the birth of little Lord Percy ; but who can doubt that the Countess also mourned deeply over the fate of her beloved brother, the rash, the brilliant Essex ? His failure in Ireland ; his return in disgrace to London ; his attempt at insurrection—that foolhardy attempt by which the lives and liberties of so many brave and faithful gentlemen were jeopardised ; and finally his pitiful death at the age of thirty-four upon Tower Hill²—these are matters of national history. Now to the lonely, disappointed woman at Syon they came as the first, perhaps as the only great sorrow of her life. She was not of a sympathetic nature, this Countess of Northumberland. Her father she scarcely remembered ; to her mother she was indifferent ; while there were periods, and frequent periods, during which she looked upon her husband with abhorrence. But Robert, Earl of Essex, had ever been her hero and her hope, so that with his downfall and death the being she held dearest in the world passed away.

¹ Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, November 1602, *Harleian MSS.*, 5353.

² February 1601.

Her husband, too, albeit he recked little of his brother-in-law's doom, had stern reason to remember that mad, boyish folly for which Essex paid with his life. Although the two Earls had never been friends, the chance of war had led Northumberland's brothers, Sir Charles and Sir Richard Percy, to fight under Essex in Ireland. These young soldiers were, indeed, veterans of the Irish wars when the handsome favourite came thither with mighty dreams of conquest and pacification. At the disastrous battle of the Blackwater, when the army of the Lord Marshal, Bagenal, was crushingly defeated by Red Hugh O'Neil,¹ and when the Marshal himself perished with 1500 men, Colonel Charles Percy led the rear-guard in the retreat, and by personal bravery and skilful manœuvring succeeded in saving the English host from annihilation. A year later he joined Essex and won his knighthood by leading the assault upon Cahir Castle, and during the action at Dundalk he fought like a worthy son of him who had once been the bravest and most resourceful captain on the Scottish Border.² As for the other brother, Sir Richard Percy, he was in command at Kinsale when Aquila and his Spaniards invaded Munster. With a force of 150 men he defended the fortress obstinately, and in the end retreated with little or no loss. Later, under Mountjoy, it fell to his share to recapture Kinsale.

Sir Charles Percy accompanied Essex to London, and made one of the small army of officers from the Irish army that practically garrisoned Essex House. The courage and many other fine qualities of the disgraced Earl had won Percy's heart, and it was not long before he succeeded in winning over yet another brother, Sir Josceline Percy, to a like enthusiasm. The result was that when Essex strove to raise London against the Queen, these foolish young men were among the first to draw their swords in the desperate venture. Arrested and thrown into the Tower, they must

¹ See *Carew MSS.*, &c.

² This was the reputation once borne by Sir Thomas Percy, afterwards the eighth Earl.

have gone to the scaffold like their leader, were it not for Northumberland's influence as one of the chiefs of the faction opposed to that of Essex. The Earl worked zealously in their favour, as did Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham; and, after a brief interval of confinement, they were pardoned on payment of £500.¹

If the Earl's domestic relations were constantly strained and unhappy, so too (for that very reason perhaps) were many of his dealings with the outer world during the trying period just described. Naturally quick-tempered and impetuous, "*after the manner of his race*,"² the shrewish tongue of Lady Northumberland had not tended to make him less irascible; and, while his pride kept him silent upon family matters, these bitter quarrels permanently soured his disposition and rendered him unreasonably susceptible to affront. Of his many lesser disputes, most of them settled at the sword's point, it will not be necessary to speak here, further than to say that Northumberland came out of these affrays with the reputation of a brave and honourable man, but an indifferent hand at the rapier.³ Two important affairs of the kind must, however, be described, although neither ended (so far as is known) in the *duello*.

The first of these took place between Northumberland and the Earl of Southampton. Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, the friend and patron of Shakespeare, was one of those young nobles who followed most assiduously

¹ *Fadera*, tom. xvi.

² Ever since the days of William *Als-germons* a fiery temper had been one of the chief attributes of the House of Percy. The first Earl of Northumberland (according to Walsingham) answered John of Gaunt "*with furious words, after the manner of his race*." The similar character of Hotspur has become famous; and we have seen how the seventh Earl vented his rage upon Lowther at Carlisle, and how the ninth Earl assailed his future stepfather, Master Francis Fitton. The hereditary temper may also be traced in the Earl's cousin, Thomas Percy of "Gunpowder Plot" notoriety, and in other offshoots of the family.

³ His studies seem to have seriously affected his eyesight, which fact would have naturally counted against him in fencing. Nevertheless he was ever ready for a fight.

the fortunes of Essex. He was indeed a near relative of the favourite, who had placed him in command of the cavalry during the disastrous attempt to reconquer Ireland. Presuming upon his kinship, Southampton sided somewhat too openly with the Countess of Northumberland as against her husband; and even allowed himself—so said the gossips—"to speak disparagingly of the Earl." These things coming to Northumberland's ears, he sent one of his friends "in hot haste" to demand an explanation. But Southampton would vouchsafe neither explanation nor apology, and a hostile meeting was accordingly agreed upon. The Queen, however, heard rumours of what had taken place, and, on the very morning chosen for the duel, both principals were arrested by her orders, and haled before the Council. Here Southampton at length condescended to explain that his remarks had been grossly exaggerated, and some sort of reconciliation was patched up between the belligerent Earls. To prevent a renewal of the trouble, they were placed under heavy bonds to keep the peace. Northumberland, when his rage had cooled down, came to look upon the wrangle as due to scandal and mischief-making and he told Sir Francis Bacon that the Queen's pacific settlement was "*the end of an idle tale.*"¹

This matter happily concluded, it was not long before the Earl's over-sensitive nature betrayed him once more into strife. The object of his enmity on this occasion was Sir Francis Vere, commander of the British auxiliary forces in the Netherlands, and one of the most renowned captains of his time. In June 1600, Northumberland, accompanied by the Earl of Rutland and Lords Monteagle and Grey, crossed over to Flanders to join in the fighting about Ostend. Before the latter town they were joined by their boon companions Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh, with whom they had made tryst, and all six found their way into Ostend before the siege. They brought with them considerable retinues, and were as splendidly attired as though they had been bound for the Queen's Court rather than for

¹ *Letters of Lord Bacon.*

the stern business of battle. Such, in fact, were the "pomp and circumstance" attendant upon their arrival in Flanders that the days of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" were recalled; and it was whispered that they had been sent by Elizabeth, not to fight under Vere, but rather as envoys plenipotentiary to the Catholics.¹

To the rough old soldier, Sir Francis Vere, so much needless display was particularly distasteful; and when he learned from Cecil that the brilliant newcomers were not royal envoys,² but simple volunteers, he did not hesitate to let them know his opinion of their fine trappings. Truth to tell, Sir Francis was a disciplinarian of the sternest kind, and did not mince matters when giving orders to his subordinates. The lieutenants serving under him at Ostend—his brother, Horace Vere, the two Sidneys, and Sir John Norris³—were forbidden to wear "*anie but plaine stuffs and serviceable harness*;" and being all men of small fortune, they were the more easily governed in this direction. But with my Lord of Northumberland and the other Court gallants it was quite a different matter; and Vere began to fear lest their fine raiment and haughty manners might threaten his authority. Accordingly he felt himself constrained to be more than usually severe towards them and they were given to understand that the gold so lavishly expended upon their backs might have been used to far greater advantage in furnishing sorely needed recruits for the service. The noble "adventurers" were vastly offended by this blunt treatment, and their feelings found vent in complaining letters to their friends at home. But Vere was not the man to allow home influence to interfere with his plans of campaign, and to all remonstrances from England he turned a deaf ear. Such differences between rugged generals and the young patricians temporarily under their

¹ Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, vol. i.

² Cecil went to extraordinary trouble to deny that Northumberland and his companions had been entrusted with a mission to the Catholics.

³ Afterwards President of Munster, and grandson of the Henry Norris executed as one of the alleged paramours of Anne Boleyn.

command have been common enough from Roman times to our own ; and Sir Francis was undoubtedly right from a military standpoint when he insisted upon absolute obedience from his subordinates. He seems, however, to have shown little tact in dealing with these spoilt children of fortune.

Northumberland, Rutland, and the others, finding themselves ungraciously received and their plans for active service rejected, grew more and more discontented with Vere's conduct of the war, and talked of leaving Flanders. "*The likelihood of these cold wars,*" wrote Sir Robert Cecil in August 1600, "*make the Earls of Northumberland, Rutland, and Grey to repent their journey, being half in mind to go into France, where there is some appearance of a war, whereby Spain may be lapped into the quarrel.*"¹ It would have been better for both sides if our volunteers had really gone to France at this juncture ; but various obstacles—the encircling Spanish army and the disapproval of Vere among the rest—combined to detain them in Ostend, until the outbreak of the famous siege of that place.² Relations grew daily more and more unpleasant meanwhile between the leader of the British troops and the young men whom he had set himself to humble. Lord Grey angrily complained both to the States General and to the English Council that he was forced to obey the whims and submit to the sneers of a man greatly his inferior in rank. Northumberland, Rutland, Monteagle and Cobham wrote in similar strains ; and even Raleigh, himself a veteran captain, found fault with Vere's arrogant methods. It is possible that those in authority remonstrated with Sir Francis ; but if so, the interference only rendered him more brusque than ever. When Northumberland (who was by way of being a student of military science) referred some question of strategy to his chief, the latter returned a surly and even contemptuous answer.³ This was enough to fire the Percy blood, and a

¹ Cecil to Sir George Carew ; *Carew MSS.*

² Ostend was besieged by the Spaniards from 1601 until 1604, when it finally surrendered. The losses on both sides were enormous.

³ Chamberlain's Letters, p. 126.

violent quarrel immediately resulted. It was even reported in England that "*at a banquet in the Low Countries, the Erle of Northumberland had stroken him (Sir Francis Vere)*" before the assembled Dutch and English officers;¹ but it seems hard to believe that so flagrant an attack upon the person of the Commander should have been allowed to go unpunished or unavenged.

Whether the Earl, goaded to fury by Vere's churlish reply, actually struck the latter or not, it is certain that by the end of January 1601 affairs reached a climax between the two English factions at Ostend. Sir Francis Vere would not resign his command: Northumberland and his friends therefore left the beleaguered city, and returned in high dudgeon to England. It is to their credit that they made no attempts to undermine Vere's reputation at Court; but they treasured up feelings of the bitterest resentment against him, and vowed to seek satisfaction at the first available opportunity.

Northumberland found that the expenses of the campaign had proved a heavy drain upon his purse, and that a period of retrenchment was necessary before he could again hope to serve abroad with the splendour which he believed to be necessary to his station. The eight months which he had spent in the Low Countries cost him £5140, 18s. 0½d., exclusive of gaming losses and some other unrecorded expenditures.² It was at this time that he engaged as his private secretary a young man of good family, Dudley Carleton³ by name. Carleton was introduced to the Earl by Sir Calisthenes Brooke, and entered upon his secretarial duties in July 1601. He became a close friend of Northumberland's fifth brother, Alan Percy; and from the letters written by him to another friend, John Chamberlain, we glean many interesting particu-

Sir Francis
Vere fights
but in war.

¹ Chamberlain, p. 112.

² *Alnwick MSS.*

³ From these modest beginnings Carleton rose to high political distinction, and became the first Viscount Dorchester.

lars regarding the Earl at this period. At the end of 1601, for instance, Carleton wrote to Chamberlain :—" *Lord Northumberland uses me with much favor. He is gone to Syon House, and means to live privately to recover his last year's expences in the Low Countries, and to provide for another journey the next.*"¹

Early in 1602, Sir Francis Vere temporarily relinquished the command in Flanders to his brother, Sir Horace, and paid a visit to England. So far from following the example of Northumberland and his associates in keeping silence at Court, Vere spoke freely of the trouble which had occurred at Ostend, and apparently sought to justify himself in high places by disparaging remarks levelled at the Earl and Lord Grey.² The exact nature of these strictures cannot now be determined ; but they were sufficiently caustic to rekindle all Northumberland's former animosity, and to draw the latter into a course of action at once ill-timed and ill-advised. Calm reflection must have shown him that the person of a general commanding the forces in war-time should be held sacred by his countrymen, and that the supposed wrongs of himself and his friends should remain unavenged until such time as Vere returned to civil life. But we know that the Earl, when under the influence of strong emotions, was not given to logical reasoning ; and moreover, he found himself surrounded by men whose counsels had anything but a peaceful tendency. These rash advisers argued that Sir Francis Vere, being absent even temporarily from his post, was at liberty to give satisfaction to those whom he had offended ; and that, furthermore, his action in publicly discussing the Ostend affair at such a time had placed him beyond the pale of forbearance.

Accordingly, on April 24, 1602, Northumberland sent from Syon House the following challenge :—

" *To the Valourous and Worthy Capt. S^r Francis Vere, L. Governor of the Brill, and Commander of ye English Forces under the States :*

" *Sir ; I told you at Ostend y^t then was no tyme to expostulate*

¹ *State Papers.*

² Chamberlain's Letters.

matters ; now I hold it proper to call you to accompt for those wronges I have heard you have done me. You love to take ye air, and ride abroad. Appoint, therefore, a place betyme to your owne likynge y^e I may meet you : Bringe you a friend wth you I will be accompaneyd wth another, y^e shall be wittnes to ye thinges I will lay to your charge.

"If you satisfye me, we will be good Friendes ; if not, we will doe as God shall put into our myndes. I will eschew all bitter wordes, as unfitt for men of our occupation. Seeke not by frivolous shiftes to divert this course of satisfaction ; for all other means than this y^e I have proscribed, I shall take as an affirmacon of y^e I have heard, which will cause me to proceed in righting myselfe, as the wronges require.

"Make no replyes by letters, but sende me your minde by this Bearer directly, whether you will or will not ; for from me you shall have no more. Give no cause of noyse in the World, to hinder this course, lest you baffle your own reputaçon.

"Whatsoever else I shall doe in this just cause of offence, fewer wordes I could not have used to have exprest my mynde." ¹

This message was delivered at Vere's lodgings in Aldersgate Street by Captain Whitelock. Sir Francis positively refused to send any reply "by bearer," as the Earl had requested. On such a serious subject, he declared that "*he could no suddenly gyve answer.*" Next morning, however, he despatched his friend, Captain Ogle, to Syon with a long letter, in which he again pointed out that a meeting such as that proposed should not be undertaken without due weighing of consequences. He also asked for an opportunity to explain his position, in the presence of several witnesses ; and expressed the belief that he could readily clear himself of the charge of having given the first offence. Evidently he recognised the full significance of Northumberland's epistle, for he alludes openly to the prospect of a duel :—

"I despise private combatinge, especially att this Tyme, that

¹ *Harleian MSS.*, No. 787.

I am ingaged in soe greate and important an action, as your Lordshipp knoweth."

In conclusion he refuses to believe that the Earl, or any other adversary, would dare to inflict personal chastisement upon him while in London, even should he refuse to meet them in the field of honour. He was the Queen's lieutenant, and that he deemed sufficient protection; nor would he seek to augment his ordinary bodyguard when he went to take the air, being (to quote his own words), "*confident that your Lordshipp will attempte nothinge unfitting yourself upon me, that alwayes lived in good reputation, and am descended from a grandfather of your owne ranke.*"¹

Northumberland refused to receive this missive from Captain Ogle, and demanded a verbal reply. Ogle, however, read the contents aloud in the Earl's hearing, and the latter consented to allow Vere time for further deliberation before insisting on what he termed "*the soldier's answer—yea or nay.*" Eventually Sir Francis sent word that he was prepared to meet his challenger; but his intentions were still to avoid a duel if possible, and he chose as his witness Sir Edward Stafford, a civilian, in preference to the many military men by whom he was surrounded. Northumberland suspected that a peaceful termination to the affair was aimed at, and objected to Stafford as too nicely diplomatic for the disputes of men whose profession was the sword. The Earl's keen desire to figure as a veteran of the wars may be noted here, as well as in his former letter. It was a foible at which even his friends must have covertly smiled. For the soldier, he declared, there was no second like a soldier. "Statesmen" and mere courtiers were too prone to "*acquaynt the Queene and Councill, if they sawe any differences betwixte them both*" (i.e. Vere and himself) "*that might breed further contention, and bringe them under the power of her Majesty's commandmentes, by their information, or . . . hinder them from goinge together into the Field, if either partye should have just cause soe to doe.*" Upon these

¹ Sir Francis Vere to the Earl of Northumberland; from Aldersgate Street, April 25, 1602. Vere was grandson of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford.

grounds he urged Vere to choose, in place of Stafford, some military man over whom he had absolute authority.

But Vere held out for Stafford and a peaceful settlement, protesting in another weighty letter against being forced into a duel. The correspondence had by this time attained considerable proportions, and Northumberland was thoroughly disgusted by the parleying of his antagonist—a course of conduct which, in common with most of the young bloods of the day, he failed to understand, and which he looked upon as arising either from cowardice or a sense of guilt on the part of Sir Francis. To the Commander he wrote that “*hee was thoroughly persuaded that hee had done him these wronges, which hee meant to laye to his charge ; and that hee would laye upp this injurious dealinge in his hearte, and righte himself thereafter as hee should think fit.*”

Vere's friends now judged it high time to interfere. None knew to what excess Northumberland's wrath might lead him, nor could Sir Francis be trusted to maintain much longer the restraint which he had imposed upon himself. The negotiations had hitherto been successfully kept from the Queen and Council ; for Northumberland, warned by the failure of his attempted duel with Lord Southampton, had taken elaborate precautions to surround this new affair with secrecy, and had begged Vere to do likewise. Nevertheless it leaked out that a duel was intended, and the news unquestionably came from the side of Sir Francis. It is not to be supposed that the Commander appealed to his Court acquaintances to prevent hostilities, although such was the expressed opinion of Northumberland, Grey, Raleigh, and other prejudiced persons. Sir Noël Caron, agent for the States General in England, and one of Vere's intimates, was the person who actually divulged the matter to the Queen, and implored her Majesty to put a stop to the controversy. As on the previous occasion, Elizabeth took prompt steps to prevent bloodshed, and commanded Northumberland, under pain of her lasting displeasure, “*to forbear any action against Sir Francis Vere, att that instant employed in her service.*”

If Northumberland had been angry before, this "foul treason," as he termed it, lashed him into a species of frenzy.

Thrust and counter-thrust. All that Cecil, and even the Queen herself, could say, failed to persuade him that Sir Francis Vere had not deliberately betrayed the entire correspondence, in order to save himself from an encounter which he feared. It was hard that a man like Vere, who had fought and bled for his country, should be suspected of such unworthy motives; but the headstrong Earl would accept no other explanation of his opponent's behaviour. The stern mandate of Elizabeth he did not venture to disobey, but he swore that when fate sent him an opportunity Sir Francis should feel the weight of his arm. In the meantime he caused a declaration to be drawn up, and published in English, French and Italian, to the effect that "*Vere was a Knave and Cowarde, and that, in fleeringe and gearinge like a common Buffoon, would wrong men of all conditions, and had neyther the honestye or the courage to satisfye any!*" This denunciation was circulated widely, not only in England, but upon the Continent; and particularly throughout the Low Countries, where Sir Francis held command, and where copies of it were derisively affixed to the walls of Ostend by venturesome Spaniards.

But if Northumberland was not able to claim satisfaction at that time, neither was he permitted to have the last word in this bitter controversy. Before a week went by, Sir Francis Vere issued a counterblast to the Earl's denunciation, which he, in his turn, had set forth not only in English, French, and Italian, but in Spanish as well. "*Because I refused to meete you,*"—thus ran the English version,—"*uppon your peremptorye and foolishe summons, you conclude mee, in a discourse sent abroad under your Name, to bee a Knave, a Coward and a Buffoone; whereuppon you have procured me to set aside all Respecte to your person, and to saye that 'You are a most lyinge and unworthy Lord.' You are bounde by Her Majestye's commandmente not to assayle mee, and*

I, by this Business committed to mee, not to seeke you. When you shall bee freer, as God shall make us meete, I maintayn it with my sworde.
FRA: VERE."

Having thus unburthened his mind, the Commander went back to the Low Countries, where he proved to the Spaniards that, in warfare at least, he was neither a buffoon nor a dastard. As might have been expected, opinions in England differed regarding the quarrel. The wild spirits of the Raleigh-Cobham faction upheld Northumberland's behaviour with enthusiasm; while, on the other hand, the Queen and most of the ministers sided with Vere, and condemned the Earl "*for challenging a great Commander of the State at such a time as, without breach of duty, he could not, nor might not, answer him.*"¹

There is no known English record of any subsequent collision between Northumberland and Sir Francis, but a contemporary foreign historian distinctly states that such an event took place, and that the Earl publicly avenged himself upon his enemy on the very steps of the throne. In Sully's *Mémoires* we read that, shortly after the accession of James I., "*the Earl of Northumberland struck Colonel Vere, in the presence of the whole court, and was for a time confined in Lambeth by the King's order.*"

The reconciliation between Northumberland and his wife in 1602 contributed largely to an important change in the Earl's public policy. Hitherto, in company with his friends Raleigh and Cobham, as well as with his pretended friends Cecil and Bacon, he had strenuously opposed the succession of James VI. of Scotland to the English throne. In so doing, he was no doubt influenced somewhat by a spirit of opposition to the party of Essex, but his main reason for refusing allegiance to the King of Scots had been founded upon a motive far higher than that of mere personal feeling. He desired, in fine, to see full religious toleration established in England, as it

The Earl, the Catholics, and King James.

¹ Lord Henry Howard to Edward Bruce; *Secret Correspondence with James VI.*, 1602.

had been in France by the Edict of 1598;¹ and he doubted whether James could be relied upon to give to the Catholics even half as much liberty as Henri IV. had granted to the Huguenots. Northumberland's own creed has already been dwelt upon in these pages. Hallam and other historians are quite in error in assuming that he belonged to the Church of Rome, simply because he consistently championed the rights of his Catholic fellow-subjects. The truth was, as he himself states, that among family connections and tenantry he numbered hundreds of Romanist families. These people, knowing him to be a man of broad and liberal views, as well as one to whom they were bound by countless hereditary ties, came in time to trust him implicitly, and to look to him for guidance and protection. Hence Northumberland felt himself to a great extent responsible for their welfare; and, as they were prevented by the penal laws from speaking for themselves, he frequently acted as their advocate, in a manner which afterwards cost him dear.

His first intimation that James VI. looked favourably upon the claims of the English Catholics came from Lady Northumberland during the happy months which they spent together at Syon, before the birth of their son, Algernon. The Countess was still a violent partisan of the Scottish King; and it is possible that she acted under orders from Edinburgh when she endeavoured to win over her husband by vague hints of religious freedom. Northumberland at first hardly credited what she said, but little by little he began to hope that there might be truth in these reiterated assertions of James's friendly attitude towards the English Romanists. Were that point once established to his satisfaction, he admitted that James would be a monarch more to his liking than the Lady Arabella, or than any of the other personages who were looked upon as pretenders to the throne. The Countess, knowing her ground, then suggested that he should send some discreet individual to sound the King of Scots upon the subject.

¹ The Edict of Nantes, which for over eighty years gave liberty of conscience to France, until shamefully revoked by Louis XIV.

When the Earl returned to Court after the birth of his heir, he noticed an ominous change in the condition of Elizabeth. Her iron will was no longer sufficient to hide from those about her the many infirmities from which she suffered, and to the discerning eye death was plainly written upon her face. Among the ministers, too, Northumberland found changes, none more surprising to him than that which had converted Sir Robert Cecil into an adherent of James. This unscrupulous son of an unscrupulous sire had skilfully trimmed his sails to the new breeze, and was busy making as good bargains for himself, his brother, and others of his kinsmen and connections as time and circumstances permitted. To placate James the more readily, he enlisted in his service Lord Henry Howard,¹ who had been for years the principal secret agent of the Scottish King in England. These things made a deep impression upon Northumberland, an impression which was strengthened by his certainty that Elizabeth had but a few months to live. He attended the Queen on her last progress, and we find him writing to Lord Cobham from Sir William Cecil's house at Burnham, "*Wednesday night the Queen was not well, but would not be known of it, for the next day she walked abroad in the Park, lest any should take notice of it.*"² On his return to London, the Earl determined to take his wife's counsel and sound James in regard to the Catholics. With this end in view, he made overtures through the Scottish Ambassador, promising his unqualified support if "toleration for the Catholics" were part of the King's policy. James replied through his Ambassador in a conciliatory manner, and promised abundant favour to all, Catholic or Protestant, who embraced his cause. Such an answer was too vague, however, for Northumberland's liking. He resolved, if possible, to bind the Scottish King to something tangible, and accordingly despatched to

¹ Youngest brother of the fourth Duke of Norfolk, who had been executed in 1572. Lord Henry afterwards became Earl of Northampton. He was a tireless inventor of the gross flattery to which James was addicted.

² *State Papers*, 1602.

Edinburgh a man in whose diplomatic powers he had the fullest confidence,—his own cousin, Thomas Percy,¹ then Constable of Alnwick Castle.

The good looks and plausible manners of Percy greatly pleased King James, who treated him more as a nobleman of distinction than as a private gentleman. The condition and prospects of the Catholics were discussed at much length between them, the King displaying "*a greate sympathy*" for this section of his future subjects.² James even went so far as to invite Percy "*to lay in his chamber*" for several nights, in order that they might the more freely talk the matter over. Eventually the Earl's agent was sent away with promises calculated to inspire English Catholics with the liveliest hope. These promises James afterwards repudiated, thinking, no doubt, that Percy's word would scarcely be believed against that of the King. In this surmise he was right, so far as his own times were concerned, but, to the unprejudiced historian of to-day, the balance of probability seems vastly in favour of Percy's veracity. For in various letters still extant, which the shifty monarch wrote to Northumberland during 1602 and 1603, the very pledges of toleration thus shamelessly denied are reiterated almost in the very words reported to the Catholics by Thomas Percy.³

There can be no doubt as to the effect produced upon his co-religionists⁴ by the agent's rosy account of this mission to Scotland. Northumberland, now practically convinced of James's liberal intentions, strongly advised his Catholic friends and adherents to accept the son of Mary Stuart as heir to the throne. Even shrewd Jesuits like Garnet, as well acquainted with the secrets of Court intrigue as most foreign ministers, were persuaded into abandoning their opposition to the Scottish monarch, and voluntarily tore up the tracts which they had prepared in favour of the

¹ Afterwards one of the ringleaders in the Gunpowder Plot. A full account of the career of this remarkable scion of the Percy family will be found on a later page.

² Thomas Percy to Northumberland; *Alnwick MSS.*

³ See *supra*.

⁴ Percy was a Romanist.

Lady Arabella or the Infanta of Spain. The great majority of the Romanists declared for James ; and only a few venerable survivors of the Northern Massacre, men whose hearts had been embittered by persecution, still held suspiciously aloof. To satisfy these, and so unite the entire Catholic body in allegiance, Northumberland wrote to James the first of a series of letters which deserve perusal, as much for their evident honesty and patriotism as for the remarkable absence from their pages of that cringing flattery which Cecil, Howard, and the other "king's men" in England used so unsparingly in their correspondence with Holyrood.¹

In pressing the urgency of the Catholic claims upon the King's notice, the Earl remarks :—" *It were a pity to lose a good Kingdom for not tolerating a mass in a corner (if upon that it resteth), so long as they shall not be too busy disturbers of the Government of the State, nor seek to make us contributors to a Peter Priest.*"²

This passage was, a year or so later, used against him in Star Chamber proceedings ; but for the time being James acquiesced, or pretended to acquiesce, in the opinion so frankly expressed that no real harm could come out of permitting Catholics to worship God in their own way. The removal of political disabilities was not asked for, but merely leave to celebrate "*mass in a corner*" without fear of prosecution.

In reply James thanked Northumberland and his Catholic friends for their support, declared that he had no intention of persecuting the latter, and expressed himself as overjoyed to discover in the Earl "*a nobleman carrying so honourable a mind, as also that doeth rightly interpret and discern*" his (the King's) "*honest intentions.*"³ Other letters were exchanged in a like strain ; and the last doubter among the Catholics was finally won over by an epistle (presently to be quoted) in which James, in unequivocal terms, pledged his honour to

¹ The letters of Northumberland to James may be found in *Camden Society Publications*, No. LXXVIII. (*Correspondence of King James, from the original Hatfield MSS.*).

² *Correspondence of King James.*

³ *Ibid.*

grant liberty of conscience to all of that faith, and even to advance such of them as proved worthy to positions of power and trust.

The correspondence between Northumberland and the King of Scots proved most disquieting to Sir Robert Cecil, who was as yet unaware of its purport. Fully conscious of his own double-dealing, he feared lest the Earl might attempt to injure him at Holyrood by disclosing proofs of the many intrigues which he had fathered in the past for the purpose of excluding James from the throne. His long and intimate knowledge of Northumberland's character might have banished any thoughts of underhand dealing from his mind; for, amid many faults, the Earl possessed the virtue of thorough loyalty to those whom he accounted his friends. But the suspicious and cynical nature, which Cecil had inherited from his father, led him to regard loyalty between man and man as an almost impossible quality. Even while he assiduously cultivated the interests of his immediate family circle, he trusted no member thereof; and his favourite maxim, like that of Mazarin, was that, in cases of suspected treachery, it was good policy to be the first traitor.

He had rather discouraged Northumberland from joining in the general change of front adopted by the party formerly opposed to James,¹ for it was his design that the King should welcome him as the first and most important of these converts. It now became Sir Robert's aim to forestall any danger which might threaten his own supremacy by poisoning James's mind in advance against the Earl, as well as against Cobham and Raleigh. In Lord Henry Howard, who acted as go-between in the secret dealings with Scotland, he found a willing instrument; for Howard treasured a spite of long standing against all three of the persons thus attacked, and in his letters to James styled them "*the diabolic triplicity*."²

¹ This party included the two Cecils, Northumberland, Rutland, Cobham, Grey, Raleigh, and Sir Francis Bacon.

² *Correspondence of King James*.

Hints, innuendoes, and even deliberate perversions of truth, all designed to fill James with detestation of Northumberland and his associates, were dictated by Cecil to his agent, for immediate transmission into Scotland. And all the while, this worthy inheritor of Burghley's mantle preserved an outward appearance of friendship towards the men whom he slandered daily, and for the Earl in particular professed the most disinterested affection.

Nothing could afford a greater contrast than the allusions made to Cecil in Northumberland's Scottish correspondence. Thoroughly honest himself, and frank even to a fault, the Earl never for a moment suspected the cruel trick which was being played upon him. In his eyes, Cecil's mock friendship was a real and valued possession; and when he mentioned the latter's name to James it was always in terms of praise. At the very time when Sir Robert was assuring his future sovereign that Northumberland was a traitor at heart, without credit or respect, and utterly odious to his countrymen, we find the Earl writing to Holyrood in this fashion :—

"The secret of his (Cecil's) conscience doth conclude your right to be the next heir, and that his heart will then wish that it may have that approbation with all men. The ancient familiarity and inward trust hath been between us, which doeth make him understand me very well; his knowledge of my opinion of y^r title, when necessity of death must leave it to any other hand; his conceiving of my determination to run that course in setting up all the faults of my fortune that way; yet doth he continue his love in preferring me, and in befriending me what he is able."

It was but scant preferment and scurvy friendship that the Earl received at the hands of this "loving" familiar. Read what Cecil (using Lord Henry Howard as a mouth-piece) sent by way of "*certaine information*" to the Scottish Court, at this very time :—

"The man is beloved of none, followed by none, trusted by no one gentleman or nobleman of quality within the land, beside his faction; no, not by the gentlemen or peasants of his own

*country, in respect of his vexation and sport, which you may know by your neighbours; and the Queen repeated one month since, when she was moved in his behalf for a regiment, saying that Raleigh had made him as odious as himself, because he would not be singular; and such were not to be employed by princes of sound policy. I protest to God nothing vexeth Cecil so much as trust imparted above merit, unto men that are unsecret and indiscreet."*¹

We are not informed why so much trouble and time should have been wasted in attacking, behind his back, a person so utterly without worth or influence, as Northumberland is here declared to be. On a later occasion, Cecil endeavoured to frighten the King by describing Northumberland as the very soul of rapacity. The Earl, it would appear, looked for gifts and favours of extraordinary value, in return for his services, and hoped to exercise great influence over James "*out of a residue of kind affection in his uncle*"² towards Mary Queen of Scots.

It is probable, however, that the very bitterness of the secret campaign against Northumberland had the effect of arousing suspicion in the King's mind that a line of policy was being quietly forced upon him from England. No monarch was more easily led than James by wary ministers who knew how to conceal their power; but let him once suspect being led, and none could show greater obstinacy. On this occasion he surprised Cecil by a cold reply to one of the letters vilifying the Earl; and even praised the latter for his good sense and honesty. In the secret code by the aid of which these communications were written, each important name was represented by a particular cipher or letter—"o" standing for Northumberland, "20" for Cecil, "24" for Elizabeth, and "30" for James. "*The letter sent from o to 30,*" wrote the King's secretary, "*is very discreetly and temperately written, and in all parts very near the truth. He says not that he is a Catholick himself, but that sundry of*

¹ Lord H. Howard (for Sir R. Cecil) to Edw. Bruce, 1602; *Secret Correspondence*.

² Thomas, seventh Earl of Northumberland.

*his retinue and dependants hath oares in their boat ; and that they are not able to resolve in any course into the whiche he shall not be made acquainted."*¹

A week before the death of the Queen, Northumberland sent word to James, warning him that the end was nigh, and that it was well to be in readiness. The Earl
James again
promises
toleration. had no fear of any difficulties arising ; and foretold the King's peaceful succession. "*She*" (Elizabeth) "*is grown very weak,*" he wrote, "*yet sometimes gives us comfort of recoveringe ; a few hours threatens us with despair of her well-doinge. Physic she will not take any, and the physicians conclude th', if this continue, she must needs fall into a distemper ; not a phrensy but rather into a dullness and a lethargy.*"²

He then proceeds to dwell once more upon the subject nearest his heart—the clemency promised by James to the English Catholics :—" *Some Papists I have in my family, who serve me as watches how others are affected ; and some that I am acquainted with ; but yet did I never hear any of them say but that they all of them wished Your Majesty the fruition of your right ; and that if supplication might procure them toleration of their consciences, they should hold themselves happy ; if not they must, by the laws of God and Right, endure it with patience ; to which hopes I ever give comfort that it would be obtained. Your Majesty may do in this case as your wisest Judgment shall direct you.*"³

All the quibbles of James's apologists cannot disguise the significance of the autograph letter which the King despatched in reply to the above appeal ; nor can any but one meaning be attached to the sentence in which peace, and even public advancement, are so freely guaranteed to those of the Romanist persuasion. Little wonder was it that, with the knowledge of such a plain-spoken promise on the part of James, English Catholics should hail his

¹ Edward Bruce (for James VI.) to Lord H. Howard (for Cecil) ; *Correspondence of King James*, p. 47.

² *Correspondence of King James*, 1603.

³ *Ibid.*

accession with confidence and joy ; or that a terrible revulsion of feeling should take place among them, when they found themselves deceived. The letter, which is dated on the day of Elizabeth's death, had best be quoted in full :—

"Right truly and well beloved Cousin :

"The more I hear from you, the more I am rejoiced and do think myself infinitely happy that one of your place, endowed with such sincerity of love towards me, and with all other parts of sufficiency, should be born one day to be a subject unto me. . . . And as to the form of my entry there, whenever it shall please God to call your Sovereign, as in my first letter I wrote unto you. so now by these presents do I confirm and renew the same ; that is to say, as God is my witness, it never was, is, or shall be my intention, to enter that kingdom in any other sort but as the son and righteous heir of England ; with all peace and calmness, and without any kind of alteration in State and Government as far as possible I can. All men that hath truly served their present Sovereign, shall be alike welcome to me as they are presently, or were in times past, unto her ; claiming nothing in that turn as King of Scotland, but hoping thereby to have the means to knit this whole Island in a happy and perpetual amity.

"As for the Catholics, I will neither persecute any that will be quiet, and give but an outward obedience to the law ; neither will I spare to advance any of them that will, by good service, worthily deserve it, and if this course will not serve every particular honest man, my privy dealing with any of them can avail but little.

"And thus I end, praying you for your own part to rest fully assured that you shall, in the own time, have proof in what high account you are with your most loving friend

"JAMES R.

"To the Earl of Northumberland :

*From Holyrood House ; Mar. ye 24th, 1603."*¹

The courier that bore this kingly message might have encountered somewhere between Tyne and Tees a horse-

¹ *Correspondence of King James.*

man, haggard and travel-stained, spurring furiously northward—a horseman that only shook his head and galloped the harder in answer to each eager hail. And ^{The Queen is dead.} again, a few hours later, while he baited his nag at some Yorkshire inn, our wondering courier might have seen yet another cavalier pass by in headlong flight, and vanish in the northern dusk. For the great Queen Elizabeth was dead—had died, indeed, while the ink was still wet upon her successor's letter to Northumberland; and now two stout-hearted gallants of the Court were riding a race to Edinburgh with the momentous news. The twain were Sir Robert Carey,¹ youngest son of old Hunsdon; and Sir Charles Percy, brother of the Earl of Northumberland.

Thanks to the wit of his elder brother, Lord Hunsdon², and to his own promptness, Carey had a long start in the race. Hunsdon, who was a Privy Councillor, and as such admitted to the dying monarch's bed-chamber, instructed his brother to lurk in the neighbouring anteroom. No sooner had the Queen ceased to breathe than a concerted signal was given; Robert Carey sprang from his place of concealment, and, elbowing his way to the courtyard, mounted a swift horse which stood there saddled and bridled for the journey. Before the lords of the Council had sufficiently recovered from the horror of the Queen's death to think of notifying her successor, Carey was already miles away. A meeting of the lords being summoned, the necessary letter to James was duly drafted; and Sir Charles Percy was chosen to carry it post-haste into Scotland. Percy had not anticipated any such mission, nor had he any picked steed waiting in the courtyard. But he was an experienced soldier,

¹ Sir Robert Carey was the seventh son of Henry, first Lord Hunsdon, and hence first cousin once removed of Queen Elizabeth. This ride first brought him to the notice of James I. In 1626 he became Lord Carey of Leppington, and in 1626 Earl of Monmouth. The titles became extinct with the death of his son Henry, second Earl of Monmouth, in 1661.

² George, second Lord Hunsdon, who died in the same year.

and it was not long before he too was speeding northward. Neither he, nor those that sent him, knew aught of the other messenger who had gone before.

James reached Enfield Chase on May 4, and thence proceeded to London. "*He rid,*" says Nicholls, "*the most part of the way from the Chase, between two*
A new king, and an old promise. *honourable personages of our land; the Earl of Northumberland upon his right hand, and the Earl of Nottingham upon his left hand.*"¹

One of the new sovereign's first acts was to make Northumberland a Privy Councillor, and to confer upon him the post of Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners. He also granted the Earl's petition for the restoration to the House of Percy of the manors of Kirk-Levinton, Hunmanby, Nafferton, Wanford, and Gembling, all in Yorkshire.² These estates had been alienated by the unhappy sixth Earl to Henry VIII., and subsequently granted by that monarch to Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox, and his wife, ancestors of King James. Lady Northumberland, too, was rewarded for her fidelity to the King by a grant of portion of Sir John Perrott's forfeited estates, to the yearly value of £500.³ Her old enemy, Coke, however, insisted on her resigning the pension of £400 allowed her by Elizabeth, when she received this new mark of royal favour;⁴ so that she found herself little better off after all, and—as might have been expected from one of her temper—assailed the Attorney-General with bitter reproaches. Later in the same year Northumberland and his wife officiated as godfather and godmother at the christening of the Princess Mary.⁵

But these honours and emoluments were empty or of small account in Northumberland's opinion. The real power, he soon realised, was to be in the hands of Cecil; while, so far from keeping his word to the Catholics, the

¹ Nicholl's *Progresses of James I.*, vol. i. p. 135.

² *Domestic State Papers, James I.* ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stow's *Annals*, p. 863.

King was hardly seated upon the throne before he assumed an attitude of vigorous hostility towards their religion. Dignities and wealth could not atone to the Earl for the fact that, through the craft of Cecil and the King's insincerity, he found himself unable to help the cause of toleration in any way. Moreover, although his own position at Court was as yet strong enough to resist the insidious schemes of the chief minister, his friends Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham were not long in experiencing the evils of Cecil's jealousy. The Secretary had inspired James with his own detestation of Raleigh, and the King came to England already convinced that Sir Walter was a breeder of discontent and a traitor in embryo. Lingard,¹ speaking of the condition of affairs among those who had placed James upon the throne, says:—"They were now divided into two factions. . . . The Secretary (Cecil), with his colleagues of the Council, and the Earl of Northumberland, with Lord Grey, Lord Cobham, and Sir Walter Raleigh. All hastened to meet the new monarch, that they might remind him of their past, and tender to him their first services. But James had already made his election. If the Secretary had more deeply offended, he was yet the more likely to prove useful. Him he confirmed in office; a share of the royal favour was also promised to Northumberland; but Cobham and Grey were left to complain of ingratitude and neglect. Raleigh lost not only the honourable post of Captain of the Guard, but the more valuable office of Warden of the Stannaries."²

Although gravely disappointed, the Earl, however, hoped for better things; and took no part in the rash intrigues by which Raleigh, Cobham, and Grey sought to reassert their influence and, at the same time, revenge themselves upon Cecil. Thus, when his three friends were arrested,

¹ The partiality of this historian for the Catholics is well known: but his account of the events leading up to the trial of Raleigh can scarcely be impugned.

² *Hist. of England*, vol. vii. p. 5.

tried—if indeed the extraordinary travesty of justice exhibited by Attorney-General Coke, in his savage abuse of Raleigh, can be regarded as part of a legal trial¹—and sentenced to death for high treason, he was able to plead vigorously in their favour. De Fonblanque, indeed, ascribes to the Earl's efforts the reprieve of Raleigh almost on the steps of the scaffold. No sooner did he learn that this "*ancient cameradoe*," this chosen companion of many years, had been sentenced by a packed Commission at Coke's savage dictation than he hurried to Windsor to intercede with the King for clemency. By this time he must have understood the real virulence of Cecil's feelings towards Sir Walter; and his loyalty to a fallen friend is all the more praiseworthy, since thereby he deliberately jeopardised his own fortunes, and dared to cross the Secretary's dearest wish. When the panther has smelt blood, it is dangerous to baulk him of his quarry. But Northumberland cared not for consequences, when the life of a friend was at stake. He insisted upon an audience with the King, denounced the trial of Raleigh as a sham, and hotly proclaimed Sir Walter's innocence of treason. But his arguments and entreaties alike fell upon deaf ears; James would have none of them. The west-country pirate had been justly condemned, he said, and "there was an end on't." Almost desperate, Northumberland turned to Queen Anne; that gentle lady who, like the consort of our own sovereign, was a princess of Denmark. Anne had little esteem for most of the lords at her husband's new Court; but the frank, impetuous Earl was one of those

¹ The following may be quoted as an example of Coke's brutal method of bolstering up his extremely weak case against Sir Walter Raleigh, and of the latter's dignified replies. Coke in open court called Raleigh "*A damnable atheist; a spider of hell; the most vile and execrable of traitors.*"

(Raleigh):—" *You speak indiscreetly, barbarously, and uncivilly.*"

(Coke):—" *I want words sufficient to express thy viperous treasons.*"

(Raleigh):—" *You want words, indeed, for you have spoken the one thing half a dozen times.*"—State Trials, II. 26.

Cobham shuffled lamentably under his various examinations; but Grey, we are told, "won the esteem of the very judges by whom he was condemned."

whom she really liked. Northumberland, returning from the audience with James, went to pay his respects to the Queen; and in his usual unreserved fashion told her everything which had occurred. Shocked at the reports of Coke's brutality, and convinced that Raleigh was guiltless of the graver sins alleged against him, Anne volunteered her services as his advocate. With tears in her eyes, she implored the King to pardon this great captain, who had served his country so well. Her prayers won the day. Raleigh's sentence was exchanged for one of imprisonment; and Northumberland posted back to London with the joyful tidings. Cobham and Grey being pardoned as well, the disappointed Secretary had to rest content, for the time, with the hanging of two poor clerics,¹ who at best were but pawns in the game. But Cecil neither forgot nor forgave; and in the end Northumberland paid dearly for his temerity.

Disillusioned as to the character of James, and cut to the quick by the King's betrayal of the Catholics, the Earl now asked permission to retire from Court, and devote himself to avocations more grateful than that of politics. James readily granted the boon; for he found Northumberland's presence an unceasing reproach to his conscience, and a restraint upon the coarseness of his nature. Monarchs do not care to be constantly reminded of their treacheries, or to feel that they are scorned by their own courtiers. Here was a great noble, a man of learning, honour, and unblemished descent, whose ears James Stuart dared not paw, and whom he feared to nickname as he did his "*Ferrets*," his "*Beagles*,"² or (in after years) his "*Dog Steenie*."³ The royal wit at best was hardly of a refined sort; and in many other respects Northumberland and the King had little in common. Even

The Earl
seeks
retirement.

¹ Watson and Clarke.

² "Ferret" and "Beagle" were playful court-names which James bestowed upon Cecil. He had many such for the compliant members of the Council.

³ The Duke of Buckingham.

through the self-satisfied pedantry of "Christendom's wisest ass" there stole at times an awkward suspicion that the Earl was laughing at him in his sleeve. Then, too, there was the old alliance between the House of Percy and Mary Queen of Scots—a secret grievance with James; for it is a historical fact that, through some strange perversion of nature, this prince cherished a grudge against most of those whose families had striven or suffered in the cause of his mother.¹ Gossip assigns yet another reason for the Earl's growing unpopularity at Court—he was a confirmed smoker of "*the noxious weed nicotiana*"; and it is by no means improbable that this fact may have strongly prejudiced the author of the "Counterblast" against him. The young Prince of Wales shared with his mother a great partiality for Northumberland, and James is said to have feared lest his heir might acquire a taste for tobacco, or religious toleration. Among the Cecils and Howards this intimacy was keenly disliked for other causes, easy to penetrate; and if anything were lacking to render the Earl completely distasteful to James, there was ever the malevolent Cecil with new tales of the evil influence exercised over Prince Henry, and of Northumberland's reprehensible merriment at the expense of the Scottish lords.²

These things being so, it is not surprising to find James rather relieved than otherwise at the prospect of the Earl's practical retirement from Court and Council. He would, perhaps, have preferred that Northumberland should take up his residence on some remote estate, such as Alnwick or Petworth; but this might not be, for the Earl could not tear himself away from the society of the wits and scholars whom he loved. Syon House was the retreat which he most favoured. There, by "the shore of silver-streaming

¹ Some writers have adduced this point in support of the changeling theory as to James's parentage.

² It was one of the charges against the Earl that he spoke "openly and with contempt" of some of the personages whom James brought with him from Scotland.—*Alnwick MSS.*

Thames," he could, like his friend Spenser, solace his mind with country joys, and forget the

"long fruitless stay
In princes' court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes, which still do fly away
Like empty shadows":

while London was still so near that, at his will, he could surround himself with all that was pleasant to him in the restless life of town. Up to this time he had only leased Syon from the Crown. In July 1604, however, the King granted him under Letters Patent "*the manor of Isleworth-Syon and Syon House, and the demesne lands, with Free Warren and all Royalties and Appurtenances.*" It was a parting gift, and certainly a royal one—whatever the giver's motives may have been.

The monastery of Syon was founded in February 1416 by Henry V., for the accommodation of sixty sisters and about twenty-five brethren of the Order of St. Bridget. The Bridgetines followed in a modified form the Augustinian rule, and most of those who originally settled at Syon were of Scandinavian birth. The first house which they built on the banks of the Thames was a very small one; but in 1431 the settlement had so flourished that a larger edifice was erected on the site of the present mansion of the Duke of Northumberland. The Rev. J. H. Blunt describes Syon as the most important establishment of its kind "founded in England during the 180 years preceding the Reformation."¹ When suppressed by Henry VIII. the annual income of the monastery amounted to about £20,000 of modern money, which was exceeded by only seven other religious houses in England. It was called the "Monastery of St. Saviour and St. Bridget of Syon." The monks and nuns dwelt

¹ Introduction to *The Myroure of our Lady*, a work largely used by the ladies of Syon Monastery.

quite apart from each other; the sole means of communication being a species of postern-gate which was never opened save upon occasions of great ceremony, such as the profession of novices. The keys of this gate were kept by the Abbess and "*two sisters that have drede of God on the one side, and by the Confessor General and two brothers on the other, that so al occasion of sclaunder be utterly take away both outwarde and inwarde.*"

Syon was one of the first of the nunneries to fall under the ban of Henry VIII. and his jackal, Cromwell. The quiet sisters were accused of sympathising with Elizabeth Burton, the "Holy Maid of Kent," and their estates were pronounced forfeit to the Crown. One of the Syon monks and the vicar of Isleworth were hanged at Tyburn; while the nuns under their superior, Katherine Palmer,¹ fled to Holland and then to Flanders. At Dermond in the latter country they sojourned for a time, until summoned back to England by Queen Mary. Meanwhile, in 1541, Syon had been used as the prison of Queen Katherine Howard; during the period immediately preceding her execution. Seven years later, the body of Henry VIII. rested here for the night, on its way to Windsor; and there is a gruesome tradition to the effect that the carcase of the royal spoliator burst as it was being conveyed from the portals of the suppressed monastery, and that Henry's blood was licked up by dogs, like the blood of King Ahab in Samaria.²

The Lord Protector Somerset, in the first year of Edward VI.'s reign, granted to himself the manor of Isleworth, with Syon House, and the other property held by the Bridgetine sisters in Middlesex. The old convent proved quite inadequate for Somerset's needs, and he began the erection of a new building—the nucleus of that which stands to-day. He also laid out a botanical

¹ This lady, the last Abbess of Syon, had, a few years before, succeeded Agnes Jordan in that office. A brass to the memory of Madame Jordan exists in Denham Church, near Uxbridge.

² Walford's *Greater London*. Augnier's *Hist. of Isleworth*.

garden, in which were planted some of the earliest mulberry-trees known in England. Many of these ancient trees are still green and flourishing. After Somerset's attainder, Syon passed to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (now known as Duke of Northumberland), and became the residence of his son, Lord Guilford Dudley, and of the latter's wife, Lady Jane Grey. From Syon Lady Jane went to London, in her ill-starred attempt to wrest the crown from the hands of Queen Mary. This sovereign kept the estate in her own hands for four years; but in 1557 the banished sisters of St. Bridget were invited to return to their old home. They found a palace where they had left a modest abbey; but their chapel and most of their treasured symbols of devotion had been destroyed by the Seymours and Dudleys. Nor were they long permitted to retain possession. In 1559 Elizabeth suppressed the Bridgetine Order once more; and the harassed ladies left Syon for the last time, taking with them the keys of the establishment. After many wanderings,¹ they found an asylum at Lisbon, where, on the banks of the Tagus, a new Syon House was founded. The sisterhood clung staunchly to their English traditions, however; and only British novices were admitted to the new convent. Dame Katherine Palmer, their leader, died in 1576. In the seventeenth century a fire broke out, which completely destroyed the nunnery buildings; but the followers of St. Bridget succeeded, with the help of their friends and relatives at home, in raising sufficient funds for the erection of a newer and finer abode. In 1755 the terrible earthquake of Lisbon levelled this structure in turn to the ground; and the sisters were again compelled to have recourse to alms in order to place a roof over their heads. For fifty years more they lived peacefully among their orange-groves, hearing little of the outside world or of "Home," save when some young novice or pupil was sent out to them from England. About the beginning of the last century they were visited by the then Duke

¹ Described at length in Augnier's *Hist. of Isleworth*.

of Northumberland.¹ The good ladies rallied the Duke upon "his unhallowed possession of the estates granted to their Order by Henry V."; and, by way of further impressing him, the Abbess produced from her strong room the rusty and ponderous keys of Syon House, which had been carried off when the Bridgetines were dispossessed by Elizabeth. "You see," they observed, "that when the Lord brings us back to our old home, we shall have the means of entering!"² The questions which they put showed that while most of them had never seen Syon-upon-Thames in their lives, the neighbourhood had become familiar to them through the traditions of refectory and cloister.

During the early part of the Peninsular War, when Lisbon was the headquarters of the English army, the convent of these unfortunate women was seized by the authorities, and turned into a military hospital. Thus for the fifth time rendered homeless, the sisters (nine in number, and all of English birth) made their way as best they could to these shores. The Earl of Shrewsbury and others gave them shelter, and in 1825 a few survivors of those who had left Lisbon still resided near the Staffordshire potteries. Since then, branches of the Order have been established at Newcastle, in Staffordshire, at Peckham in Surrey, and at Spettisbury in Dorset.³ The ancient keys of Syon House are still jealously preserved by the Abbess-Provincial.

From 1559 until 1604 Syon and Isleworth remained crown property, although leased during that time to various subjects. We have seen how Northumberland, after occupying the house for some years as a tenant, finally entered into full possession of the estate by grace of James I.

¹ The second Duke.

² The Duke, however, took great pains to explain to the nuns that "all the locks at Syon House had been altered."—Walford's *Greater London*.

³ The English Bridgetines have no connection with the Irish community of the same name founded in 1808 by Bishop Delany of Kildare, under the authority of Pope Gregory XVI.

Freed by his own wish from the strain of Court life, Northumberland devoted himself to scientific studies, to gardening (then almost an unknown art in England), and to the entertainment of those friends who gladly sought him out in his retirement. Nor were the pilgrims to Syon either few or undistinguished; for the fame of the Earl as a scholar, and a patron of scholars, had spread through many lands. Even Bacon, his secret enemy, commended him in the most flattering terms for his "culture, capacity, and learning."¹ The bent of his mind was naturally towards mathematics and physics; but he had a catholic taste and "could talk wisely and well in full many branches of knowledge." To his own order he was proud and distant, caring little for their tortuous intrigues and alternate pomp and servility. But among men of genius he was truly at home; and to these his purse and his house were never closed. Shakespeare² and Ben Jonson he knew, and appreciated; and the last days of Spenser had been comforted by his kindness. Among scientists, Thomas Harriot the mathematician (who had been introduced to him by Raleigh)³ received at his hands a yearly pension of £120; as did Robert Hues, Walter Warner, and, at a later day, Nicholas Tarporey.⁴ Dr. Alexander Rhead, in one of his medical treatises, describes the Earl as "the favourer of all good learning, and Mæcænas of learned men." Bacon, by his own admission, owed much to the encouragement of Northumberland, and was a frequent guest at Syon; although he was at the time engaged in more than one intrigue against his host. The Syon Household Accounts bear witness to countless benefactions to writers, geographers, physicians, &c., as well as to schools and colleges,

¹ *Cabala*, p. 23.

² Shakespeare is said to have drawn the noble character of the Earl of Northumberland (the "Loyal Earl") in *Henry VII.* out of affection for the similar qualities of his descendant.

³ Harriot had accompanied Raleigh on his first voyage to Virginia.

⁴ Wood's *Athena Oxoniensis* (Bliss), p. 299. Hues and Warner were among the pioneers of mathematical study in England.

No foreign man of letters visited London without paying at least one visit to the Earl, and special agents scoured the marts of Europe to add new volumes to the great library which was growing so rapidly under his watchful eye.¹

His services to learning were so well recognised, that on August 30, 1605, the University of Oxford conferred the honorary degree of M.A. upon "Henry Percy, the most generous Earl of Northumberland, a great encourager of learning and learned men, especially mathematicians, who, as others, have in a high manner celebrated his worth."²

This was perhaps the part of his life to which the Earl always looked back with the greatest fondness. Raleigh's society he missed greatly, no doubt; although there is a possibility that the frequent licences which he obtained for "*searching the recordes at the Tower*"³ may have led to secret meetings with his friend, then beginning the "History of the World" in that gloomy stronghold. But he still had his books, his laboratory, his gardens, and his "*pypes of tobacco*" for constant companions; while the building operations in which he was engaged, and the comings and goings of his guests, kept him agreeably employed. His wife's quarrelsome disposition troubled him but little, since she now, save at rare intervals, lived apart from him; and altogether he had turned his back for good upon the sordid troubles of the world.

But dire trouble came to him notwithstanding; and even in his quiet library the relentless world sought him out.

¹ Northumberland's bills for bookbinding, and for the cataloguing of his library at Syon, were at this time very large. He also expended considerable sums in the purchase of scientific appliances; and there are frequent mentions of tobacco consigned to him, and of "*pypes for tobacco*."—*Syon MSS.*

² Wood's *Fasti Oxonienses*, Part I. p. 312.

³ *Syon MSS.*

III

THE man whose desperate acts brought about the ruin of Northumberland's life was his cousin, Thomas Percy—
 he who had visited King James at Holyrood on behalf of the Catholics, and who now filled the posts of Constable of Alnwick Castle and general agent of the Earl's northern estates. The career of this individual—half fanatic, half ruffian—was so strange, and withal so characteristic of the time, that little apology is needed for recalling it here.

Thomas
Percy of
"Gunpowder
Treason."

To begin with, Thomas Percy was a great-grandson of the "Magnificent Earl" of Northumberland,¹ and a grandson of that Josceline Percy of Beverley who was reported to have been poisoned by the relatives of his son's wife, the Watertons of Walton.² Percy's father and mother were Edward Percy of Beverley, and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Waterton, knight. His elder brother, Alan, inherited the property of this branch of the family, and served for some years as M.P. for Beverley.³ He himself was born at Beverley about 1560, and, like his kinsman the Earl, bred in the Protestant faith. Coming to London, with the intention of studying for the law, he changed his mind and took to the sword instead. Of active service he apparently saw none, although he participated in the movements for the defence of the country against Spanish invasion. For years the life which he led was of the wildest; and that part of London known as "Alsatia"—the haunt of rufflers and cut-throats—knew him as one

¹ See *Genealogy*, Tables II. and III.

² See *ante*, under the sixth Earl.

³ His last *known* male representative was Alan Percy, Esquire, of Beverley, said to have been *de jure* Earl of Northumberland after the extinction of the senior male line in 1686.

of its "free companions." His dare-devil exploits not infrequently led him into trouble, and, on at least one occasion, into perilous proximity to the hangman's noose. It was then that one of his cousins, Charles or Alan Percy, learned of his predicament, and appealed to Northumberland and Essex in his behalf. The latter wrote to Justice Beaumont in February 1596 :—" *I understand by this bearer, my servant Meyricke, of your willing disposition to favour Thomas Percy, a near kinsman of my brother of Northumberland, who is in trouble for some offence imputed to him. I pray you to continue the same, that therefore his life may not be in hazard. He is a gentleman, well descended and of good parts, and very able to do his country good service; you shall do a thing very acceptable to us both, and not disagreeable with equity, which we will upon all occasions deserve of you.*"¹

Percy was accordingly released from the clink by favour of Beaumont; and Northumberland, on his promising to reform, took him into his London household. Here his plausible manners made such an impression that, a month or two later, he was sent north to act as Constable of Alnwick. By birth a Yorkshireman, he was not popular among the Earl's tenants on the Border, whose customs and prejudices he took no pains to understand. His irresponsible life in London, moreover, had rendered him not over nice in dealing with his neighbours, and on more than one occasion he was accused of absolute dishonesty. The people beneath him he treated either with unjustifiable harshness, or equally unjustifiable laxity; and the charges made against him by the enraged Northumbrians fill many closely written pages of the Alnwick MSS.

At length complaints became so numerous, that the Earl was compelled to hold an investigation into Percy's conduct. The result was hardly in the culprit's favour; but he wrote several letters to Northumberland, justifying himself with so great a skill and such an admirable assumption of simplicity, that the latter was convinced of his probity and fidelity. Faithful, according to his lights, he

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. v.

seems certainly to have been, so far as his cousin was concerned; but his sense of morality was sadly dulled, and nature had fitted him for a moss-trooper or a gentleman-adventurer rather than for the factor of a great estate. After the investigation into his affairs, Northumberland forgave him, and even permitted him to retain his posts; but henceforward he exercised his duties through the medium of a deputy, merely visiting the North at intervals for the collection of rents.

In the meantime he had married a Catholic lady, Martha, daughter of Robert Wright of Plowland-in-Holderness; and, not professing any particular religion of his own at the time, had decided to embrace that of his wife. He was received into the Romanist faith about 1596, and at once became one of its strongest partisans. Gifted with considerable eloquence, a comely presence, and exceptional talents for intrigue, he always obtained a hearing in the councils of the Catholics, to the exclusion of wiser and more prudent men; and while the conservative majority shrank from the violence of the measures which he proposed, there was a fanatical remnant which applauded and encouraged him.

About this time Northumberland, urged by the happy state of affairs which liberty of conscience had produced in France, began to dream of an English Edict of Toleration. Thomas Percy, as we have seen, was very useful to him in gathering Catholic opinion on this subject. While attending a meeting of the suppressed religion during 1598, he fell into the hands of the Watch, together with a number of other "recusants," and was lodged for the night in Wood Street compter.¹ Northumberland's influence procured him his liberty early next day; but one of his fellow-prisoners did not fare so well. This unfortunate, William Richardson by name, a Jesuit of Seville Ecclesiastical College, was convicted of being a "*Popish priest*," and of "*having come to England contrary to the statute*." For these crimes he was hanged within twelve hours after his capture.²

¹ *State Papers.*

² *Ibid.*

The journey of Thomas Percy to Scotland, the welcome accorded to him at Holyrood, and the promises alleged to have been made to him by James, have been already dwelt upon. Upon his shoulders and those of Northumberland the whole responsibility rested for the attitude which the Catholics adopted towards the Scottish King up to the time of his accession. Indeed by his co-religionists Percy was held responsible not only for the truth of his own statements, but for the Earl's good faith as well. Therefore when James proved false, it was but natural that an outcry should arise from the Romanists (and particularly from Garnet and the old leaders, whose opposition had been overcome by Percy's arguments) that they had been sold by Northumberland and his cousin. The accusation was a most unjust one in the Earl's case, for if ever a man had acted disinterestedly and with good intention it was he. Thomas Percy, too, had been clearly duped by the King; and the shameful and undeserved position in which he found himself wrought him to a pitch of ungovernable fury. In his reckless anger, he even dared to present a remonstrance to the King, calling upon him to be true to his plighted word; an exploit for which, singularly enough, he was allowed to go unpunished. No answer was returned to this appeal; and the conservative Catholics, still looking with suspicion upon Percy, failed to summon him to their councils. This cruel buffet of fortune—unjust treatment from his own people—extinguished the last glimmer of prudence in his mind. He turned aside from his former friends, and enlisted himself among that small minority of rabid fanatics already spoken of as forming the most advanced wing of the English Catholics. These extremists, desperadoes and madmen for the most part, had pledged themselves to stop at nothing save the complete supremacy of the Catholic faith in England. By the moderate party—those who asked merely for liberty of conscience—the fanatical element was shunned and condemned; but although its numbers were few, it made up for this lack

The
Gunpowder
Plot, and
Thomas
Percy.

by that extraordinary strength of will peculiar to religious enthusiasts.

We have two contemporary descriptions of Thomas Percy's appearance. His fellow-conspirator, the priest Greenway, states that Percy was forty-five years of age, but looked older through premature greyness. "*In figure,*" says the same authority, he was "*tall and handsome, his eyes large and lively, and the expression of his countenance pleasing, tho' grave; and, notwithstanding the boldness of his character, his manners . . . gentle and quiet.*"¹ The Proclamation of a reward for his capture is as follows:—"The said Percy is a tall man with a great broad beard, a good face, and hair, mingled with white hairs, but the head more white than his beard. He stoopeth somewhat in the shoulders, is well coloured in the face, long-footed, and small-legged."² The well-known picture "from life" of the conspirators in council, represents Percy as by no means the tallest among them, with a keen face, and up-curved moustaches.

Even the fanatics, among whom Percy now found himself, had at first no intention of resorting to such terrible measures as those which they afterwards adopted. They hoped to terrorise James by threats of war from abroad, and agents were despatched to the Catholic Courts of Europe with vague schemes of this kind. There were also projects for the release of Arabella Stuart, and for the capture of the Prince of Wales. The bloody Lancashire Assizes of 1604 and their results, however, filled Percy and his fellows with a lust for immediate and awful revenge. At these assizes six Catholic priests had been tried and executed under the penal statute known as "27 Elizabeth"; and one of the judges had laid it down as law that any layman hearing mass or taking part in Romanist sacraments was guilty of treason-felony. An ancient gentleman of Lancashire, Pound by name, who protested against this decision, was

The
Gunpowder
Plot

¹ *Father Greenway's MSS.*

² "Gunpowder Plot Book," *Original State Papers*, Record Office.

dragged before the Star Chamber,¹ fined £1000, pilloried, and committed to the Fleet Prison "at the King's pleasure." Moderate Catholics throughout the realm realised that their high hopes were at an end; and prepared themselves to bear with fortitude a continuance of the Elizabethan persecution. Not so the frenzied band that looked to Robert Catesby as its chief. These men—they were not more than seven—resolved to strike a blow which, they madly fancied, would paralyse the Protestant power.

Once embarked with Catesby and Thomas Winter in their atrocious conspiracy, Percy became the most ardent and impatient of the seven. He had been recently admitted, through Northumberland's influence, to a position in the corps of Gentlemen Pensioners; and this enabled him to supply his partners with news of the Court. He also brought into the league a valuable recruit in the person of his brother-in-law, John Wright,² formerly a follower of Essex, and renowned as "the best swordsman of his time in England." "*About the middle of Easter Term (1605)*" according to Speed, "*Thomas Percy, as hote as Hotspur himself, came puffing to Catesby's lodging in Lambeth, and asked 'Shall we always be talking, and never doe anything?'*"³ The "lodging in Lambeth" was a desolate house in Lambeth marshes, which was for months the principal meeting-place of the plotters.

It was at length determined to attempt the destruction of the King, Lords and Commons at one stroke by means of gunpowder, large stores of which were accordingly purchased abroad and conveyed to England. Meanwhile the number of those in the dreadful secret had been increased. Guido Fawkes (a soldier of fortune, born of good family in Yorkshire), Robert Winter, Keyes, and

¹ During Mr. Pound's examination he was attacked by Coke, Cecil, Chief Justice Popham, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, with extraordinary vindictiveness.

² Percy had married Wright's sister (see *Genealogy*, Table III.). Christopher Wright, brother of John, subsequently joined the plot at Percy's instigation. Both brothers had been subjected to fines and imprisonment as Romanists.

³ Speed's *Chronicle*.

*Large and
well known
secret. Catesby
and Percy
were the
principal
plotters.*

Christopher Wright, and Bates, a confidential lackey, one after another joined the black list. Funds were, however, lacking; and to remedy this defect Sir Everard Digby, Rookwood, and Tresham, all gentlemen of large fortune, were admitted to the league and took the oath, subsequently receiving the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of the Jesuit priest, Garnet. That Father Garnet had no suspicion of the Plot is abundantly proved by the Crown evidence collected for his subsequent trial,¹ and by the statements of Fawkes and Robert Winter. Another priest, however (Greenway), was certainly cognisant of the conspirators' designs, and probably shared in their councils, until sent abroad in the extravagant hope of obtaining papal sanction for the meditated crime.

An important step was taken when Percy hired a small dwelling in Westminster, next to the Houses of Parliament. It was a two-storied building, with a little garden, surrounded by high walls; and belonged to one Whinneard, keeper of the King's Wardrobe. Whinneard let it to a person named Ferris, who in turn sub-let it to Thomas Percy; the latter explaining that, as a Gentleman Pensioner and the Earl of Northumberland's agent, he desired a town residence in that quarter. The gunpowder recently purchased was next conveyed up the river, landed in sacks and carried to the Westminster house, where Guido Fawkes was installed as caretaker under the name of "John Johnson, servant to Mr. Percy."

Catesby, Percy, Fawkes, and Thomas Winter at once set to work upon a tunnel, by which they proposed to gain access to the cellars of Westminster Hall. A fortnight was spent in excavating the basement of Percy's house, and piercing through the massive walls of the neighbouring structure. The work had to be done at night, and the conspirators worked with extraordinary energy and perseverance. Greenway expresses his astonishment that "*men of their quality should do more than as many workmen accus-*

¹ The parts of this evidence which most clearly bore out Garnet's innocence were coolly suppressed by Attorney-General Coke, but may be seen in the MS. still preserved. The oath was taken in a lonely house situated in the fields between Clement's and Lincoln's Inns.

*tomed to earn their daily bread by labour."*¹ He also marvels how they, "*who were unusually tall men, should endure for so long a time the intense fatigue of working, day and night, in the stooping posture rendered necessary by the straitness of the place.*"² While engaged in this work, they were one night startled by loud noises on the further side of the wall. Thinking themselves discovered, they retreated in haste; but investigation proved that the sounds proceeded from a cellar occupied by a dealer in coals. Overtures were made to this person; and as his business happened to be poor, he was persuaded into transferring the tenancy of the cellar to Percy. This took place in March 1605; and the tunnel having been completed, the stored gunpowder was carried through it into the cellar.

Matters were now in readiness for the actual consummation of their fiendish enterprise, and it was determined to explode the powder on the day that the King came to open Parliament—*i.e.* on November 5, 1605. Fawkes, either by lot or at the prompting of his own fanaticism, was chosen to light the fatal train. It was at first intended that all the Catholic members of both Houses, and all fair-minded Protestants like Northumberland, should be warned to absent themselves from the doomed gathering. It soon became apparent, however, that this could not be done without betraying the murderous scheme. Sundry of the conspirators then pleaded earnestly that warnings should be sent to one or two persons at least. Percy was anxious to save his cousin and patron, the Earl of Northumberland; and Tresham exerted all his influence in favour of Lord Monteagle,³ his brother-in-law. Catesby, however, strenuously opposed even this slight concession to humanity, and vowed that were his own son Robert⁴ one

¹ *Greenway's MSS.*

² *Ibid.*

³ William Parker, Lord Monteagle, was the son of Lord Morley by the heiress of Monteagle. He had married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Tresham, and was a secret Romanist. Among his direct descendants was the late Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

⁴ This youth married a daughter of Thomas Percy, his father's fellow-criminal, a little while before the discovery of the Gunpowder treason.

of those about to attend Parliament he would not imperil the success of the Plot by giving him the slightest hint. Language like this carried the day ; and it was decided by a majority of the plotters that the presence or absence of Northumberland and Monteagle must be left to chance. Percy bowed to this decision ; Tresham, on the contrary, inveighed so bitterly against it that Catesby began to regret the admission of his cousin to their league of wrath. In the end, as we shall see, the anxiety of Tresham in Monteagle's behalf led to the discovery of the Plot.

Sir Everard Digby contributed the sum of £1500 to the undertaking, and promised that, on the fateful day, he would gather all his Catholic country neighbours at Dunsmore Heath in Warwickshire, under pretext of a great hunting party. Thus, when the blow was struck, he would be able (while disclaiming any connection with the terrible crime) to proclaim as sovereign some prince or princess favourable to the Romanist party. This should have been the Prince of Wales, who was known to be of liberal mind ; but, when it was learned that Henry was to accompany his father to Westminster, the choice of the conspirators fell upon his younger brother. The task of carrying off Prince Charles was allotted to Thomas Percy ; and if this failed the Princess Elizabeth,¹ then under the tuition of Lord Harrington near Coventry, was to be seized by Digby, and proclaimed Queen.

These preliminaries having been settled, Thomas Percy went north, according to his custom, for the purpose of taking over the rents collected by his deputies, the Earl of Northumberland's bailiffs. The amount of which he possessed himself exceeded £3000 ; and this he resolved to devote to the expenses of the Plot. On Friday, November 1, he returned to London, unknown to his patron the Earl, who believed him still absent in the North. Indeed Northumberland would not have learned of Percy's presence in town until after the discovery of

¹ Through this princess the present Royal House of Great Britain derives its descent from James I. and the English monarchs.

the conspiracy, but for the mistake made by one of his cousin's servants, a man named Davison. Not being in the confidence of his master, Davison went to visit the former's nephew, Josceline Percy,¹ at Syon, on Sunday, November 3, and casually let fall the news that Thomas had come back from his northern excursion. When Percy discovered that his treacherous plan had been thus spoilt by his servitor, he decided that it were best to show himself at Syon, and make some kind of false report. Accordingly, on the following day²—which was the eve of that fixed for the blowing up of Parliament—he rode out to Isleworth, “sauced with a gudgeon”³ the unsuspecting Northumberland, and afterwards dined with the latter and his guests at table, discussing politics in an apparently frank and natural manner.⁴ Later in the day he called at Essex House, which was occupied by Lady Northumberland and her children, and where the Earl occasionally resided when on good terms with his wife. To all that he met he announced his intention of departing anew for the North that evening. But, although these visits to Syon and Essex House were brought forward by the Earl's enemies as tending to prove the assertion that Northumberland had been warned to absent himself from Parliament on the 5th, there seems no reason to believe that any such warning was given. Percy's sole interview with his patron took place at Syon, when they were surrounded by witnesses, and when any such secret communication was impossible. Moreover if he had been warned, and was a party to the Plot, Northumberland would scarcely have come to London that evening, and spent the night at Essex House so as to be able to attend the morrow's ceremony with convenience. And,

¹ This Josceline was son of Alan Percy of Beverley, elder brother of Thomas Percy, and occupied a position in the Earl's household. Like his uncle, he was a Catholic.

² Monday, November 4.

³ The Earl's own expression, meaning that Percy put him off with some tale about the rents.

⁴ Correspondence of Northumberland with the Council, *Orig. State Papers*.

if cognisant of the Plot, he would have, on his side, endeavoured to penetrate the designs of the Council—a matter of little difficulty, seeing that he was a Councillor himself, and had more than one warm friend in that body—and thus given Percy, Catesby, and the others an opportunity of avoiding discovery even at the last moment. But Thomas Percy left his patron's presence in high feather, confident that the dastardly scheme must certainly succeed, and that the mysterious letter sent by Tresham to Lord Monteagle had failed to awaken the Government to a sense of their danger.

For Percy knew of the existence of this notorious letter, as did most of his brother-plotters; Monteagle's body-servant having seen the document on his master's table, and conveyed the startling intelligence to his friend Bates. But when the morning of November 4 passed by without any signs of ministerial activity, and when Percy observed nothing suspicious in the manner of those whom he met at Syon and Essex House, they deemed themselves safe from interference.

Francis Tresham, hoping at all hazards to preserve Lord Monteagle's life, sent to him that obscurely worded missive which, while intended merely as a vague hint of danger, was sufficient to betray the whole Plot. Monteagle, greatly puzzled by this communication, carried it to Whitehall, where it was laid before Salisbury and the inner circle of the Council. The ease with which the meaning of these vague phrases was penetrated, and the unaccountable delay in acting upon the discovery thus made, have given rise in some quarters to the fantastic charge that Salisbury had known of the Plot from its inception, and even secretly fostered it in order to cover the Catholics with odium and put an end to their claims. The world has seldom known a falsier or more unscrupulous minister than Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury; but even he was hardly capable of an intrigue so diabolical as this. One explanation of the delay

The Plot
revealed:
death of
Percy.

is doubtless to be found in the King's absence at Royston with a hunting-party. Fully aware of the royal weakness, Salisbury and his friends were willing to have it appear that the riddle of the letter had been solved by the wisdom of the "British Solomon" alone. James returned from the chase on October 31, and, according to his courtiers, at once divined that the threatened peril was connected with gunpowder, and that the Houses of Parliament were menaced with destruction "from below" *i.e.* from the vaults.

On Monday, November 4, the Lord Chamberlain, Suffolk, visited the cellars of Westminster Hall on a pretended tour of inspection. There he found Guido Fawkes mounting guard over the gunpowder, which lay about him in sacks like so much small-coal. When questioned by Suffolk, Fawkes answered boldly that his name was John Johnson, and that he had been placed there to look after the coals of his employer, Mr. Percy. Suffolk pretended to be satisfied by this reply, and, merely remarking that Mr. Percy was well supplied with fuel, he left the vault, and reported what had occurred at Whitehall. No sooner had he gone, than Fawkes hastened (presumably through the tunnel, although the evidence on this point is not clear) to inform Percy of the visit which he had received. One might have thought an occurrence so suspicious, coupled with their knowledge of Tresham's letter, quite enough to alarm the conspirators to the point of panic. But these fanatics were as sanguine as they were resolute. Guido Fawkes returned to his cellar with the utmost *sang froid*, and Percy went quietly towards the meeting-place¹ beyond Clement's Inn, calling at Essex House on his way. Catesby and John Wright had left town on the preceding day, with the intention of joining Digby's "hunt" on Dunsmore Heath; but Christopher Wright, Rookwood, Keyes, Tresham, Thomas Winter, and the servant, Bates, were still in London, and apparently still confident.

¹ The "*lonely house*" already mentioned.

Meanwhile Sir Thomas Knyvet,¹ with a strong body of men-at-arms, had been sent from Whitehall to apprehend Guido Fawkes, and investigate the contents of his "coal-sacks." Knyvet, however, like Lord Suffolk, had too great a respect for the safety of his own person to think of taking the cellar by storm. He had reason to believe that a great quantity of gunpowder was stored therein; and any rash attempt to seize the pretended "John Johnson" might result in a terrific explosion and loss of life. Indeed, had Fawkes but remained in his retreat, and waited for Knyvet's party to attack him, the day might have had a disastrous ending. But some motive—curiosity, perhaps, or a desire for fresh air—induced him to raise the trap-door by which the cellar communicated with the street without. Instantly his arms and neck were firmly grasped by the men-at-arms whom Knyvet had stationed around the doorway. In vain he struggled to free himself, his intention being to light the powder-train with the fuse which he held in his hand, and thus blow himself and his captors to eternity. But the men-at-arms knew the risk they ran, and held fast. Fawkes was dragged into the street, and overpowered by numbers; after which the cautious Knyvet descended into the vault, found the gunpowder, and sealed up the premises in the King's name. Fawkes was at once haled before James and the Council, in whose presence he bore himself with extraordinary bravado.² Although subjected to indescribable tortures for five days, he steadfastly refused to betray his associates, or even to admit that his supposed employer, Percy, had anything to do with the Plot.

No attempt was made to keep the arrest of Fawkes secret, and the news spread rapidly from Westminster to the city. Thomas Percy heard of it as he passed

¹ Sir Thomas Knyvet, afterwards the first (and last) Lord Knyvet. His nephew and heir was Henry Carey, first Viscount Falkland.

² When one of James's Scottish courtiers demanded why he had placed the gunpowder under Westminster, he replied, "To blow the Scots back to their own country."

Clement's Inn. Hurrying to the lonely rendezvous in the fields, he found there his brother-in-law, Christopher Wright, and a pair of fleet horses kept in readiness for such an emergency. Leaving a secret token for their friends, the two men mounted and fled. They rode at headlong speed, throwing their cloaks away to lighten the load. The line of flight lay through Dunstable, Fenny Stratford, and Stoney Stratford. Just beyond the last-named village, they overtook Catesby and John Wright riding leisurely along the high-road. A few words sufficed to explain what had happened, and in a trice Catesby and the elder Wright had set spurs to their horses, and were galloping as fast as the others. Rookwood, Keyes, and Bates (who had waited in London until the 5th) overtook the party near Towcester; and about 6 P.M. on November 6 the entire company of fugitives reached Ashby St. Legers¹ in Northamptonshire. The ancient mansion was filled with guests, among them Robert Winter, one of the conspirators; and Thomas Percy met there his young daughter, wife of Catesby's eldest son. The lord of the mansion would not stay longer than to drink a tankard of ale, obtain fresh horses, and give Robert Winter and some other gentlemen time to mount. Then all pushed on to Dunchurch, five miles away, where Sir Everard Digby was entertaining a great company of Catholic gentlemen after their hunt on Dunsmore Heath. The priests Garnet and Oldcorne were of this party, and it was vaguely known that important news was expected from London, although Digby had taken care to keep his honest guests in the dark as to the nature of that news.

The assembled sportsmen were sitting down to supper, when Catesby and his companions rode furiously into the courtyard. "Save yourself, Digby!" they shouted "The Plot is betrayed. There is a price upon our heads." In a few moments, the household was in confusion, and the grim story of the Gunpowder treason and its failure were known to all. Old Garnet wrung his hands, and

¹ Catesby's ancestral seat.

cried out that now indeed the Catholic cause was undone. Murmurs of abhorrence and anger rose on every side. At this Sir Everard Digby drew his sword, and called upon all true Catholics to join him in arms against "the perjured King of Scots." Only the nine conspirators¹ rallied to his call. The rest of those present recoiled in horror from the confessed partner in such a crime. Led by his own relative, Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill, they passed one after another from the hall, mounted, and rode away. "Had we succeeded," exclaimed Thomas Percy bitterly, "they would not have looked upon us with such despite!"² This may or may not be true; but it is at least certain that the Catholic gentlemen assembled at Dunchurch, while frankly disaffected against King James, had no share, active or passive, in the Gunpowder Plot.

The conspirators, seeing themselves abandoned by those upon whom they had counted for support, held urgent deliberation around Digby's supper-table. At length, upon the advice of Catesby, it was resolved to fly into Wales, where there were many Catholics, and there raise the standard of rebellion. Taking with them abundance of provisions, as well as arms and ammunition, they rode through Warwick and into Worcestershire, forcibly possessing themselves of horses when they could obtain them. None of the Catholic gentry to whom they appealed were willing to aid them; indeed Digby complains that they were driven from many doors as men who had brought ruin and disgrace upon the Romanist faith.³ Only one recruit was added to their ranks, a country squire of Worcestershire, named John Grant. As they crossed the borders of Staffordshire, they learned that a hue and cry had been raised, and that Sir Richard Walsh, Sheriff of Worcester, at the head of the *posse comitatus*, was hard

¹ Thomas Winter, brother of Robert, was a guest at the Dunchurch "hunting-party."

² Evidence of Bates; *Orig. State Papers*.

³ Statement of Sir Everard Digby; *Orig. State Papers*.

upon their track. The road lay clear before them into Wales; but their long journey had so fatigued them, that they determined to make a stand at a small house called Holbeach, the residence of Stephen Littleton.¹ To this place, which was just over the Staffordshire border, they came late on the night of Thursday, November 7. It had been raining hard, and the gunpowder which they carried with them became so damp that they were obliged to spread it out on the hearth to dry. Then they laid themselves down with the intention of obtaining a few hours' repose, before the pursuers learned their whereabouts.

In the grey of dawn, a loud explosion broke the stillness; and some of the conspirators, thus suddenly roused from sleep, for the moment fancied themselves victims of their own fell design. Investigation showed that the powder spread before the fire to dry had been ignited by a blazing splinter of wood. Accepting the event as an ill omen sent from Heaven, the startled men threw themselves upon their knees and prayed to God for forgiveness. Their nerves seemed completely shattered, and they were no longer able to sleep. Digby paced restlessly up and down, and at length left the house, with the intention, he declared, of seeking succour from his friends in the neighbourhood. Robert Winter, Littleton, the owner of the place, and the lackey Bates next stole out, and concealed themselves in a wood hard by. But Catesby, Thomas Percy, the two Wrights, Rookwood, Grant, Keyes, and Thomas Winter made no attempt to leave Holbeach. The explosion had been heard for some distance around, and when Sheriff Walsh and his followers reached the Staffordshire border, a number of peasants were ready to guide them "to where the traitors lay."

About noon Walsh succeeded in surrounding Holbeach with armed men. He himself then rode within earshot of

¹ Of the Staffordshire family, represented by Lord Hatherton. The present Lord Hatherton's mother was Lady Margaret Percy, daughter of the fifth Duke of Northumberland.

the house, and in a loud voice called upon the inmates to surrender. The only reply was a shot, for the conspirators preferred to die in fight rather than suffer the hideous tortures which awaited them, should they be taken alive. The sheriff then ordered his men to advance. The house was set on fire by one party, while another attacked the door of the courtyard, and discharged their muskets through the breach made by the exploding gunpowder.

"Stand by me, Tom!" cried Catesby to Thomas Percy.
"Stand by me, and we will die together!"

Percy and he stood back to back accordingly, and were shot through the bodies with two bullets from a single musket,¹ but not before they had killed or disabled several of their assailants.² Catesby, with a last effort, drew himself to a corner of the room where a picture of the Virgin Mary hung, and there died making the sign of the cross. Percy lingered until the following day (November 9), when he too passed away, expressing deep contrition for his sins. His brothers-in-law, the Wrights, fought bravely; but even John Wright's great skill as a swordsman could not avail against numbers, and both Christopher and he were slain. The rest then surrendered; and, later in the day, Robert Winter and Keyes were discovered hiding in the wood. Sir Everard Digby also fell into Walsh's hands, being betrayed by the servant of one of his friends. All except Bates followed the example of Guido Fawkes in defying the torture, and heroically refusing to incriminate Father Garnet,³ the Earl of Northumberland, or any other innocent person. Bates, however, while on the rack, admitted almost everything which his inquisitors suggested. Tresham made a voluntary statement, involving Garnet, but this he subsequently recanted.

¹ The man who fired this shot, one Thomas Hall, received a life pension of two shillings a day from the King. He continued to draw this annual gratuity until 1640.—*Exchequer Rolls*.

² Speed's *Chronicle*.

³ This unfortunate priest was captured with his companion Oldcorne, at Hindlip Hall, near Worcester, a few days later, and charged with complicity in the Plot.

The bodies of Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy, and John and Christopher Wright were laid to rest with scant ceremony in the little garden of Holbeach. Of the other conspirators, all save Tresham suffered capital punishment. Sir Everard Digby, Robert Winter, John Grant, and Thomas Bates (whose "confession" did not save him, poor wretch!) suffered on January 30; and on January 31 Thomas Winter, Rookwood, Keyes, and Guido Fawkes met their doom.¹ The condemned men (none of whom could stand erect after the tortures they had endured) were drawn upon hurdles to the west end of St. Paul's churchyard, and there hanged, drawn, and quartered, in the presence of an enormous concourse of people.²

While the surviving conspirators were thus paying the dread penalty of their crime, the Earl of Northumberland lay a prisoner in the Tower, charged with being an accessory to the Gunpowder Plot. Salisbury remembers old scores. Salisbury's chance of vengeance had come at last, and he was determined that it should be used to the full.

We have seen how Thomas Percy dined with his cousin, the Earl, at Syon on November 4, 1605. That night Northumberland lay at Essex House in London, so as to be able to attend the proposed opening of Parliament on November 5 with greater ease. He retired to rest early, and was already asleep when the news of Guido Fawkes's arrest reached his household. Fearful of his temper, none dared to disturb him, until soon after dawn, when the Earl of Worcester³ arrived from the torture-chamber of Fawkes with messages from the Council. Northumberland, awakened from his morning slumbers, addressed Lord Worcester with some asperity, and replied to the questions of the Council "*with scorn and confidence.*"⁴ Thomas

¹ Speed's *Chronicle*.

² There is a contemporary woodcut depicting this repulsive scene, which may be found reproduced in the *Pictorial History of England*.

³ Ancestor of the Duke of Beaufort.

⁴ Worcester's Report; *State Papers*.

Percy, he declared, was certainly his cousin, and had assuredly dined with him at Syon on the preceding day. When informed of the Plot, he expressed anxiety regarding the large sum collected for him by Thomas Percy in the North; and at once volunteered to join in the pursuit of his relative, with men and horses.¹ To this offer Salisbury sent back a most discouraging reply, advising Northumberland that his departure from London at such a time, and under such circumstances, was certain to be misconstrued. The Earl now saw that his enemies intended to make capital out of the connection between Thomas Percy and himself, and his well-known liberal views in regard to the Catholics. This belief was confirmed when, later in the morning, an intimation reached him that the King desired his absence from Council until "*certain matters of importance*" were cleared up.

At the Council held on November 5, under the King's presidency, Lord Salisbury brought forward a number of facts bearing upon Northumberland's past conduct, which he held to be of a highly suspicious character. Although James had not yet outlived his respect for the Earl, he was easily persuaded to sign a warrant, placing the latter temporarily "*under restraint*," so that he might be brought before the Council at any time. Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the person to whose care the *quasi-prisoner* was committed; and the indignant Earl was commanded to present himself without further delay or parley at the Primate's palace in Croydon—there to remain until the Council felt disposed to accord him a hearing.

Well knowing that Northumberland had many powerful friends at home and abroad, it was Lord Salisbury's plan to prevent any interference on their part by pretending to regard the Earl's confinement as a petty piece of formality, intended rather for the prisoner's benefit than otherwise, and certain to terminate very shortly. To all the King's ministers at foreign Courts letters were written in this strain. As a specimen, that addressed to Sir Charles Cornwallis

¹ Worcester's Report.

may be quoted here :—" *It hath been thought meet in pollicie of State (all circumstances considered) to commit the Earl of Northumberland to the Archbishop of Canterbury, there to be honorably used untill things be more quiett; whereof if you should hear any Judgment made, as if His Majesty or his Councill could harbour a thought of such a savadge practise to be lodged in such a nobleman's breast, you shall do well to suppress it as a malicious Discourse and Invention; this being only done to satisfie the World that nothing be undone which belongeth to pollicie of State when the whole Monarchy was proscribed to dissolution; and being no more than himself discreetly approved as necessarie, when he received the sentence of the Council for his Restrainte.*"¹

We have only Salisbury's word for the statement that the Earl "*himself discreetly approved as necessarie*" this curtailment of his liberty; and the chances are that this was quite as great a falsehood as the assertion that "*His Majesty or his Councill*" harboured no thought of connecting their noble prisoner with the Plot. But these artfully composed letters produced the desired effect, and by lulling the fears of Northumberland's friends, prevented James from being tampered with in the former's behalf. Meanwhile, through various secret channels, Salisbury caused to be spread a number of reports most discreditable to the Earl. These stories could, if necessary, be disowned by the minister; but in the meantime they did their victim much harm, and cost him at least one valued friend. Sir William Browne, then in the Netherlands, was informed by Salisbury's agents that Northumberland had been deeply concerned in the Gunpowder treason, and that his cousin Thomas Percy had given him warning not to attend the opening of Parliament on November 5. Greatly shocked by this intelligence (which he believed, as coming from a person high in the British secret service), Browne wrote from Flushing to Lord Lisle, on November 9 :—

" *Seeing the Earle of Northumberland hath so villainously and deuilishly forgot himself, I am sorry that euer I honored*

¹ Salisbury to Cornwallis; *Winwood's Memoirs*, ii. 172.

him, and [more sory that I have a chyld that carryes his name."¹

In many other directions there is evidence of the work of defamation which was making the way clear for the Earl's impeachment. The Irish Viceroy wrote to Lord Suffolk asking if the "evill tales" about Northumberland were true; and on November 19 Sir Edmond Hoby informs Sir Thomas Edmonds, that "*some say that Northumberland received the like letter that Monteagle did, but concealed it.*"²

The behaviour of an accused person placed upon his own defence frequently sheds a great light upon the question of that person's guilt or innocence. This being so, it must be admitted that the letters written by Northumberland, and the straightforward manner in which he bore himself during the period of detention at Croydon, are strongly in his favour. His language, when addressing King or ministers, is that of a man who feels himself unjustly accused, and who courts the fullest inquiry into his actions. There is also discernible through his correspondence a not unnatural feeling of resentment towards Thomas Percy, and a desire to give the fullest information at his disposal concerning the latter's misdeeds. While protesting against his needless detention and enforced absence from his beloved Syon, he obeyed the King's command to the letter; and Archbishop Bancroft had nothing to complain of in the conduct of his prisoner.

On November 8, Northumberland wrote from the Archbishop's house at Croydon, to the "Most Honourable Councill," in these terms:—

"I shalbe gladde as matters falles out to store you with circumstances, to the ende that the bare truth may appeare. Amongst the rest forgett not this one, I praye you. First by

¹ *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. p. 316.

² *Sidney Papers*.

the letters of Ffotherley,¹ you may see how he [Percy] stored himself with my money, as passing with three Portmantues filled upon Friday, at night, at Ware. Secondlie, his horse kept in diett at Doncaster for his retorne; and Wednesdays, the day after this horrible fact should be committed, was the tyme appointed for him to meet with the rest of my Money and the rest of my Companie. Thirdly, that by Ffotherley's letter, your Lordships may see Percy's excuse; for the money that was wanting was to be receaved at London, so as there was a greater proportion of horses sente doune by appointment than there was that came upp.

"Ffourthlie, as most palpable; This was one. Ffriday was the day hee came to London; I, neither anie of myne, did see him till Monday twelve of the clock, when he came to Sion to me; went away presentlie after dinner, after he had 'Sawsed mee with a Gudgeon,'² and then appeared to the rest of my people at Essex House, from whence hee was to passe as hee told me, and then told them, to Ware, that night; givinge them all the same gudgeon that hee hadde bestowed on me before, as alsoe to my brother Charles, my brother Alan, Sir Edward Ffrancis, Edmund Powton, Giles Greene and Captain Whitlock, as may appeare if they be examined. Soe as, my Lords, it is probable I should not have seen him at Sion uppon Monday, if one accident had not happened; and that was this; A man of his came to the Courte to my lodging uppon Sondag to enquire for Thomas Percy; this man was a stranger to all the Companie, and never seene before by anie of them; the fashion of the man your lordships shall understande to the end he may bee caught hereafter. If this man by this means had not discovered that his master, Thomas Percy, had lyne in tonne by this Accidente; and that he founde that my followers of necessitie must knowe it, I thinke I should not have seene him uppon Monday at Sion and the rest of my companie that afternoone at Essex House, one of the greatest arguments of suspition laid to my chardge.

¹ Letters from this official, the Earl's auditor, were enclosed. They bore date November 7th and 8th.

² According to the evidence of Keyes, one of the conspirators, Percy had told the Earl a falsehood "in order to get money from him."

*Though I be somewhat tedious in these trifles, I say to your Lordships they be matters of moment to me, and I hope you will pardon me, for I saie still, the more you know, the better it will be for me."*¹

Next day (November 9) he addressed the King in the following appeal for justice :—

" Sir,

" *The true integrity of my soule towards you hastens me to put all conceits of anger out of y^r Ma^t hart towards y^r faith-fullest seruant, the want of y^r presence besides that it is disgracefull to me in the world grieues my inwardest thoughts. Y^r Ma: in y^r function vppon earth is a God; your self out of y^r justice and mercy seekes to imitate that great Master. He forgives those that repent. I auowe that I am sorrie in my minde of y^r displeasure (now got by my passions, and neuer imbraced in my thoughts wth the lest Jot of Intention) I beseche y^r Ma: therefore hold on that imitaōn the world takes notice of in you in this case of mine; for y^r ma^t knowes not how much it stinges me y^r displeasure. At this time the burden is much more heauy, because the world may take Jealousy as things fall out at this pnt, and lay a greater imputaōn to my charge, then euer they can rite me, in hereafter. Saue, I humbly craue y^r M^{ty}, the bird in my bosome²; I mean my loyalty, or the lest imaginaōn y^r may fall wth in the compas of fooles censures. If I have not endured enough allready of y^r indignaōn for my offence, returne me hereafter to begin again frō whence y^r Ma^t shall free me for the pnt. If my seruice at any time have deserued this favor, or may hereafter, lett these lines move his hart to forgett it, to whose person and seruice he is deuoted for euer that desires the attribute of one of*

" Y^r Ma^t loyallest subiects and

" humble vassals,

" Croydon this pnt

" Thursday."

" NORTHUD.³

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. ci. p. 4.

² This self-same figure of speech was used by Sir Ralph Percy, "the Gledde of Dunstanburgh," when he died for the Lancastrian cause at Hedgley Moor.

³ *Orig. State Papers—Domestic*; *Jas. I.*: Record Office.

It was not until the morning of November 10 that the Earl learned of the capture of Thomas Percy and the others at Holbeach. He at once wrote to the Council, urging that Percy's wounds should be tended with the best surgical skill, in order that the conspirator's life might be prolonged sufficiently to enable him to make a full confession. He advised that foreign surgeons of skill should be employed, as the English surgeons were clumsy in dealing with bullet wounds; and even offered to defray the expense of bringing over some experienced foreigner.¹ While this solicitude for his unhappy cousin was confessedly due to selfish motives,² no better argument could have been advanced to show that the Earl had nothing to fear, and perhaps much to gain, from a deathbed statement by Thomas Percy.

No surgeon, however, of any sort, good or bad, was summoned to dress Percy's wounds, and the sometime Constable of Alnwick died without making any recorded deposition. If tradition be not a liar, there was at least one personage in Great Britain who felt relieved that such was the case. We know that the dead man had been a persistent witness to certain pledges alleged to have been made to him by King James in favour of the English Catholics. It may be, therefore, that the uneasy monarch dreaded a sworn statement to the same effect from the lips of a dying man. At any rate, the following story is recorded by the Bishop of Dromore:—" *The present Earl of Hardwicke informs me that he had heard his father, the late Lord Chancellor, tell this remarkable anecdote concerning the gunpowder conspirators: That when the account was brought to King James of some of them having been pursued into Worcester, where part of them were secured, and the rest killed by the Posse Comitatus, the King eagerly inquired what they had done with Percy; and when they told him that he was killed, the King could not conceal his satisfaction, but*

¹ *Original State Papers; Gunpowder Plot Book.*

² The writer states that he wished Percy to live so that he (Northumberland) and his brothers, Charles and Alan, might be vindicated.

seemed relieved from an anxious suspense, that evidently showed he was glad that Percy was in a condition to tell no tales."¹

Even as his father had done while a prisoner in the Tower, Northumberland continued day after day, and week after week, to demand a fair trial, or else his release, at the hands of the King and Council. And just as in the case of his father, these appeals were unheeded by sovereign or ministers. In vain he pointed to the whole tenor of his life as free from any evidence of disloyalty. In vain he used arguments like the following:—*"The servis that I can doe in this case is but to present to your memories sutche things as are most lykely to give means of discovery. Therefore consider, I desier your lordships, the course of my lyfe; whether it hathe not leaned more of late yeares to private domesticall pleasures, than to other ambitions. Examin but my humors in Buildings, Gardenings, and Private Expenses, theas two yeares past. Looke but upon those few arms at Syon; my stable of hors at this instant; the Dispersedness of them and of my servuants; the listell concours of followers; and your Lordships will fynd they be very consonant one to another, and all of them to put by all iealousy. Weighe but a little further, that not any one of theas men yett knowen, or that have busied themselves in this action, so mutche as their faces have been noted of me (Percy only excepted). Besides looke but into the store of Treasor that I had gathered into my purse against thys tyme (which I will be aschamed to write, but your lordships may understande uppon Enquire), and there will, in somme of them be found circumstances that will leade on to a better and certainter knowledge of the thing in question. In what sorte, or howe, or to whome, out of theas perticulars your Lordship shall procede, I leaue to your graver iudgments; but suere I am out of theas, coniectures may be made and somewhat bolted out, if the sentence be not true, 'Qui vadit plane vadit sane.' Theas things I write, not but in way of rememoraçons, by cause*

An appeal
for justice,
and its
outcome.

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, quoted by De Fonblanque, vol. ii. p. 263.

they are things pryuat, and not open to your lordships' knowledges; yett sutche things as may give satisfaction if they be scanned.

*"I hope your Lordships will pardon me if I be earnest in this cause, for the obloquie lies as yett heavy upon me; and that your Lordships will as well embrace, and bundle upp circumstances out of your charites that makes for me, as thos that gives suspitions."*¹

By this time even Salisbury was compelled to admit, however reluctantly, that it was impossible to connect the Earl in any reasonable way with the Gunpowder Plot. But even when this fact was fully established, Northumberland was as far from obtaining his freedom as ever. With a Cecil at the helm of State, charges, true or false, were never lacking against those to whom a grudge was owing. At the instigation of Salisbury and Northampton it was decided to investigate the dealings between the Earl of Northumberland and the discontented Catholics. In point of fact an attempt was to be made to implicate the Earl in the old, vague plots for which Raleigh, Cobham, and Grey had been punished. The Archbishop was ordered to bring his prisoner before the Council; and Chief-Justice Popham examined the latter searchingly and at great length. Nothing of a treasonable nature was discovered; and the baffled Salisbury was obliged to hark back to Elizabethan times for a pretext upon which to accuse Northumberland. But even then, the principal fact elicited by Popham's questions could scarcely have made pleasant reading for the King. For the Earl said:—"*In the late Queen's time, the King allowed me to give hopes to the English Catholics, which I did, but went no further.*"²

During his long examination (it lasted for several hours) he had been obliged to stand; and the fatigue thus caused might, he feared, have caused him to forget some items of importance. Accordingly, on the day following, he supplemented his evidence by a letter to the Council,

¹ Northumberland to the Council, November 15, 1605; *Orig. State Papers: Record Office.*

² *State Papers.*

bringing forward some points which had slipped his memory through "*standing soe long and talkinge soe long.*" Among other things, he said:—"Nowe my Lords it is requisitt that I doe lay doune circumstances and truthe that will cleare whatsoever was said in that tyme" [before Elizabeth's death] "was don with an honest intention to obey the King and doe him service, and one is this:—the wordel" [world] "knowes that I am no Papist; the wordel knows no man is more obedient to the laws of the Church of England than I am; and the wordel may knowe I am noe Supporter of Recusants, neither is my house pestered with them, some one or two old servants to my House excepted."¹

If Northumberland desired his freedom, he made a fatal mistake in repeating the old charge that James had deliberately encouraged the English Catholics to look for toleration under his rule. A wiser or less honest man would have followed the safe course of suppressing this fact altogether; but the Earl, anxious only to tell the truth, practically accused his sovereign of hypocrisy and falsehood—thus playing directly into the hands of Salisbury and the Cecil Party. The "little Beagle"² was no longer obliged to scent out new charges in order to course his quarry down. Northumberland's own rash statements were quite sufficient to fill the King with a bitter spite against him; and no further arguments were necessary to bring about his committal to the Tower—the recognised preliminary to a Star Chamber trial. James signed the warrant for his imprisonment on November 27; and he was removed from Croydon to the Tower on the following day.

More than six months passed by before Attorney-General Coke could frame an indictment sufficiently plausible to be laid even before such a body as the Star Chamber. In the hope of discovering some peg upon which to hang an accusation of treason, the Earl's northern

¹ Northumberland to the Council; Nov. 24, 1605; *Orig. State Papers*.

² James's nickname for Lord Salisbury.

castles were seized and searched under royal warrant. Evidently Northumberland's conscience was at ease, for he wrote in jesting vein to Salisbury¹ on this subject. Sir Henry Widdrington (who owed him a considerable sum of money) had been ordered to conduct the investigations at Alnwick, Tynemouth, Prudhoe, and Cockermouth. Hearing of this, Northumberland begged that "*Percy's closet doore at Alnwick might be sealed up, as it contained, among other papers, bonds of Witherington's to the value of 1000 marks, which he might be tempted to dispose of to his owne advantage.*"² The only documents discovered in the North which bore in any way upon the Catholic intrigues were letters from the Earl to his tenants, written after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, and warning them against paying any more money to Thomas Percy. The members of Catesby's conspiracy suffered torture and death without implicating Northumberland in any way. Nevertheless Coke succeeded, by sheer impudence and exaggeration, in drawing up a case for the Crown sufficient to give the proceedings a far-off semblance of justice. The extraordinary animus displayed against the Earl by Salisbury, Northampton, and Coke, as well as by the King, may be judged from unprejudiced contemporary evidence. The letters of the French Ambassador, La Boderie,³ show conclusively that Northumberland's conviction had been decided on from the date of his committal to the Tower, and that the very terms of his sentence were arranged between James and the Cecil *clique* at least twenty-four hours before the so-called trial.⁴ La Boderie in his extraordinarily accurate letter of forecast (written on June 26) asserts that the intended sentence was dictated entirely "*by political feeling and the wish to get rid of a spirited rival.*"⁵ Continuing, he describes how Cecil had worked upon the

¹ He still considered Salisbury well disposed towards him and never suspected treachery.

² *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. viii.

³ *Ambassades de M. de la Boderie.*

⁴ La Boderie to Villeroy, June 26, 1606; *Ambassades de M. de la Boderie.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

King's natural cowardliness in order to attain his ends. The cases of Lords Stourton and Mordaunt, too, afford striking comment upon the manner in which Northumberland was treated. Both of these noblemen were under grave suspicion, if not of complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, at least of being aware that some such blow was to be attempted against the Government. It is highly probable that they had both received warnings similar to that sent by Tresham to Monteagle. On the fateful fifth of November they absented themselves from London, and it was proved that relays of horses were kept in readiness for them along the roads in case of emergency, yet Stourton and Mordaunt were merely charged with having "disregarded the King's summons to Parliament," and the cases against them were dismissed with insignificant fines.

Northumberland, against whom no such suspicions existed, was at length brought before the Star Chamber, on June 27, 1606. There, to quote the words of Gardiner,¹ he "was forced to listen to a long and passionate harangue from Coke, who, after mentioning, as he had done in Raleigh's case, all manner of plots with which he was unable to prove that the prisoner had ever been connected,² charged him with having committed certain contempts and misdemeanours against the King. His employment of Percy to carry letters to James in Scotland was brought against him, as if he had attempted to put himself at the head of the Catholic party. It was also objected that after the discovery of the Plot he had written letters to his tenants, directing them to keep his rents out of Percy's hands, but saying nothing of the apprehension of the traitor." He had also allowed Percy to become one of the band of Gentlemen Pensioners, knowing that his cousin, as a Catholic, was hardly likely

¹ *History of England*.

² The Attorney-General attempted to bolster up his case by the assertion (probably false) that "*other matters of higher nature*" were reserved by the Crown, and would be brought forward in case the Council was not fully convinced of Northumberland's guilt.—*Star Chamber Proceedings*, 1606; *Cotton MSS., Vespasian*, E. xiv. 452.

to take the oath of Supremacy. "By this weakness—for undoubtedly it was no more than a weakness," continues Gardiner, "he had disobeyed the orders given him, and placed about the person of the King a man who was engaged in plotting his death." It was not even pretended, however, that the Earl had the slightest cognisance of these plots.

Such was the sum-total of Coke's accusations—the outcome of six months of rigorous inquiry! No wonder that Northumberland hardly considered it necessary to plead at all in rebuttal of such trivial charges, and contented himself with proving that his brother, Sir Alan Percy, and not himself, was responsible for the admission of Thomas Percy to the band of Gentlemen Pensioners.¹ Apparently he anticipated no more serious outcome of the trial than a reprimand, and a small fine, for having taken King James at his word,² and allowed the employment of a Catholic in the royal service. He was soon to learn that the "trial" was a mere pretext; and that "he occupied the position of the hapless victim in the old fable of 'The Wolf and the Lamb.'" The Court found him guilty of "*serious offences against the King's Majesty*"; and proceeded to pass the following outrageous sentence:—
*"Adjudged and ordered that the said Earl shall, for the said offences, pay for a Fine, to the use of His Majesty, the sum of £30,000; and shall be displaced and removed from the place of a Privy Counsellor, and from being Lieutenant of His Majesty's Counties, and from all and every other Office, Honour or Place, which he holdeth by His Majesty's Grace and Favour, and hereafter be disabled to take upon him, or exercise, any of the said Offices or Places; and that he shall be returned Prisoner to the said Tower of London, from whence he came, there to remain Prisoner as before, during His Majesty's Pleasure."*³

Northumberland appears to have been stunned by the

¹ *Proceedings of the Star Chamber.*

² See the King's letter to Northumberland already quoted.

³ Decree in the Star Chamber; *Cotton MSS., Vesp., E. xiv.*

appalling injustice of this sentence. He uttered no word of protest; and passed silently from the Star Chamber to "*that Charon's barge*" (as he termed it afterwards) which bore him back to the Tower, there to expiate for sixteen years the dual folly of having believed a King's promises, and robbed a minister of his intended victim. Modern historians are almost unanimous in condemning the tribunal and its decision. In his critical work on the Gunpowder Plot,¹ Jaryne shows the unconstitutional methods pursued, and the colossal injustice of the Earl's punishment. In summing up the proceedings Hallam says:—

"Every one must agree that the fine imposed upon this nobleman was preposterous. Were we even to admit that suspicion might justify his long imprisonment, a participation in one of the most atrocious conspiracies recorded in history was, if proved, to be more severely punished; if not proved, not at all."²

Five days after his conviction, Northumberland wrote from the Tower³ a letter of protest addressed to the King.

He pointed out in calm and dignified terms the utter incompatibility between the venial faults for which he had been tried, and the extraordinary magnitude of the penalties inflicted. Under the circumstances he asked James to exercise his clemency in so far as to grant a further inquiry.

No answer was vouchsafed to this appeal for justice. Six weeks later, Northumberland again addressed the throne, this time with reference to the fine in which he found himself condemned. Lifelong imprisonment and forfeiture of all his honours he was prepared to bear with resignation; but for the sake of his wife, family, and great army of dependants, he petitions James to reduce in some degree the enormous fine. "*It is,*" he declares with justice, "*the greatest Fine that ever was gott upon any Subject in this*

The Earl's
two friends:
his wife and
his queen.

¹ *The Gunpowder Plot*, p. 245.

² Hallam, *Constitutional History*, vol. ii. p. 47.

³ *Original State Papers*, July 2, 1606.

Realme. My Estate is not such as perhappes the World takes it for; my Debts are greater than is believed, and there is a Companie of little ones to provide for, which lies uppon my Handes. I know Your Ma^{ty} to be soe gracious that you desire not to punish others for my Falte; this is a Burden will light as well uppon their Fortunes as upon myne. Besides, I knowe it is not a little Money will doe Your Ma^{ty} Good, and it is a little that would doe us a greate deal of Harme; and howsoever it hath pleased the Lords to censure me, I doe appeale to Your Ma^{ty}, a higher Judge, for Favour, who knowes more than them in this Case. Therefore I most humblie desire Your Ma^{ty} for Mittigacōn. What it shall please you that I shall undergoe I will, as I am able, endeavour to sattisfie.”¹ If James ever received this second plea, he left it unanswered and unacknowledged, as he had done the former one.

In the day of his sorrow and persecution, when the timorous world shrank from sympathy with the fallen lest blame should fall upon those who lent him countenance, Northumberland was fortunate in finding at least two outspoken and faithful friends. One of these was Anne of Denmark, Queen of Great Britain; in the other we are at once surprised and gratified to recognise the imprisoned Earl's shrewish wife—she whose fiery temper had made their married life one long series of quarrels and separations. The fair shrew was a shrew still (as we shall presently discover), but only to the enemies of her husband. The latter's undeserved disgrace did more to win for him his wife's regard, and to arouse her loyalty in his interest, than anything that had transpired since the time of their marriage. No sooner, indeed, did prison doors close upon the Earl—no sooner did it become difficult, and even perilous, to befriend him, than Lady Northumberland forsook all else for his sake, and resolved to devote her life to the cause of his liberation. In James's gentle consort she found an unfailing ally and protectress. Queen Anne positively refused to believe in the Earl's guilt, and, not being afraid of Lord Salisbury and his

¹ Northumberland to the King, Sept. 13, 1606; *Original State Papers*.

crew, she proclaimed her sentiments without hesitation. Nay, she even wrote to Northumberland, assuring him of her unshaken confidence and sympathy. We are not told how King James regarded this act of domestic rebellion; but it is easy to understand that the Queen's gracious letter brought consolation and hope to the captive in the Tower. He wrote in heartfelt acknowledgment; and received from Anne a second missive, condemning the ministers who had plotted his ruin and reasserting a belief in his innocence. She added that she had already interceded with the King in his behalf, and hoped to do so again with greater success. Northumberland's reply was as follows:—

"Most gracious Soueraigne:—I am soe much bounden to your Ma^{ty} for your Favours, and especallie for this last Desire you had of releasing me of my Misfortunes by the Motion you last made, as I can saie no more towards the Expressing of my inwarde Thoughts, but that I am the same to your Ma^{ty} that ever I was, since the first Day I saw you; that is Your Ma^{ty}'s faithful Seruant, as readie to sacrifice his Life for you and yours; and although these are but small Ceremonies of my Dutie, and humble Acceptance and acknowledging of them, as being common trafficks from Prisoners and Men stung with Afflictions, yett are they such as wee can present Princes with no others.

"Therefore, good Madam, give me leave, I beseech you, to wish for better Occasions wherein I may make good that I have vowed to you. If Fortune denie me of such a Happiness, then doe I presente the humble Prayers of a Prisoner (to God), that hath leisure to doe that and means to do nothing els to demonstrate his Faith.

"Your Ma^{ty}'s faithfull Vassall and Seruant,

"H. NORTHUMBERLAND.

"Tower, xx of August,

"1606."¹

The friendship so openly shown him by Anne of Denmark, and the zeal and courage with which Lady

¹ Northumberland to the Queen; *Original State Papers.*

Northumberland championed his cause, led the Earl to believe that his term of imprisonment was destined to be of short duration. Already he pictured himself back again at Syon among his books and gardens; and in this spirit wrote confidently to Lord Exeter.¹ The King, he declared would soon discover how false were the charges which had been made against him. One official mistake had been distorted by Coke's sophistries into the semblance of "*haynous treason*"; but now, when James had time to give the matter full consideration, he felt sure that justice would be done him. But the year 1606 was allowed to pass by—as were many other years!—without any sign of clemency on the part of the King. Northumberland wrote him two more letters during the autumn and winter; but these were ignored as their predecessors had been. The Countess imagined that it was James's intention to release her husband from the Tower at the expiration of one twelvemonth from his first committal, *i.e.* on November 27, 1606. This expectation proving vain, both husband and wife hoped that the order of release would be issued on the anniversary of the Star Chamber sentence; and so comforted themselves through the winter and spring. But June 27, 1607, came and went without any sign of royal leniency. The Countess, who had come to Essex House for the purpose of welcoming her liberated lord, went back in deepest grief to Syon; while Northumberland asked for a few books, and prepared to face another year of confinement.

This was the time chosen by Queen Anne for a visit of consolation to the sorrowing woman at Syon. She knew well that by publicly countenancing Lady Northumberland at such a period, she braved the King's anger, and earned for herself the venomous hatred of Lord Salisbury. Yet she drove from London to Isleworth, for the sole purpose of

¹ The Earl of Exeter, Salisbury's elder brother, while not a partisan of Northumberland, does not seem to have joined the rest of the Cecil confederacy in actively persecuting their former friend and associate. This letter is dated July 20, 1606.

comforting this wife whom the selfish world had abandoned in her misfortune. What must Attorney-General Coke have thought if, driving along the Brentford road from his mansion at Osterley, he had seen the royal liveries entering the north gates of Syon! And what must they have said (and thought) at the Council, when the news was carried thither!

We are not told what passed between the two women, consoler and consoled, upon that June afternoon in the Syon gardens. But a playful, yet pathetic touch in one of Northumberland's letters, shows us the gentle Queen presiding over a loving little court composed of the Countess and her babes. The words were written immediately after Anne's journey to Syon, and the epistle breathes throughout a spirit of earnest gratitude. Despite the assumed lightness of his allusion to those "*little servants*," his children, it is plain that the Earl was deeply moved by this generous and womanly action on the part of the Queen:—

"It pleaseth Your Ma^{ty} euerie Day soe to adde new Favours on our poore Familie that I must, from myselfe and for them, presente you still with one and the same Gifte; an unprofitable Servant's Devotion: and sing still and so often one Noate; 'Thankes, Thankes, Thankes, and nothing but Thankes!' Thus I desire to ende my Letter before it be almoste begonne, leas I prouue tedious, being Banckrout of all other Occasions to rend open my Brest, that you may see my Harte how much it is Your Ma^{ty}."

*"I understand how evill you were waited on at Sion by your little Servants; theire Wills weare good, though their Endeavours nought; and Your Ma^{ty}'s Acceptance soe noble as, because I may not saie what I would, I will close up my Lipps, and will my Penne to yeald noe more Inke for the Present."*¹

Through the Queen's incessant persuasions, James was at last (sorely against his will) induced to grant an audience to Lady Northumberland. His Majesty had heard tales to the effect that the Countess possessed a biting tongue upon occasion, and that, when stirred to anger, she was no

¹ Northumberland to the Queen; *Original State Papers*.

respector of persons. He also knew (from efforts in his own behalf during Elizabeth's lifetime) that she could urge a cause with untiring perseverance. For all these reasons, he dreaded an interview with her, knowing full well that he could advance no reason worthy of respect for keeping the Earl longer in prison. Queen Anne's entreaties, however, finally resulted in his consenting to hear what Lady Northumberland had to say. Very sagaciously (from his own standpoint) he refused to enter into argument with her, listened to her pleading with a profound assumption of judicial wisdom, and dismissed her with the unpromising statements that he would "*take his own time*" in the matter, and that before Northumberland could hope to be released he must prove to the satisfaction of King and Council "*that Thomas Percy gave him no warning of the intended crime.*"¹ He could show himself obstinate enough at times, especially when (as in the case of the Earl) he believed that his personal safety or peace of mind might be endangered by a lenient policy; and neither the Queen nor Lady Northumberland could move him to any further concession.

From the Tower the Earl then wrote, pointing out, among other things, the practical impossibility of bringing forward any but circumstantial evidence to prove that the Conspirator Percy had not warned him of the Gunpowder Plot. "*At my last soliciting Your Majestie, by my Wife, to think of my Libertie,*" he observes; "*it pleased you to saie that you would take your owne Tyme. I have not byne importunate since, because I conceived it disliked you; though it be a matter almost the dearest Thing Man enjoys. Your Majestie hath byne a King manie Yeares, and can judge of Offences. I will not therefore dispute of myne, but must still be an Intercessor for myselfe to Your Majestie for your favour; and I beseech you let the former Desire of my House and selfe to doe you Service, move you somewhat, since I doubt not but that I shall see the Day that you will esteeme me to have byne as honest and faithfull a Servant as ever you had in England. It pleased Your*

¹ *Original State Papers.*

*Majestie amongst other Speeches uppon her, urging of my Innocence, to wish I could prove that Percie gave me no Notice (the verie mayne Pointe of my Troubles); but Your Majestie, that is soe greate a Scholler, and soe judicious, cannot but know how impossible it is to prove a negative."*¹

Even while her husband still believed in and trusted Salisbury, Lady Northumberland, with feminine instinct, had suspected the latter's treachery. The Earl at first disregarded her opinions, and persisted in treating the Lord Treasurer as a friend, or at least as one that did not seek to injure him. His misfortunes he chose rather to ascribe to the jealousy of the Scottish courtiers than to any bad faith on the part of the Cecils and Howards. Lady Northumberland, on the contrary, grew more and more convinced, as time went on, that Salisbury, and no other, was at the bottom of her lord's undeserved persecution. There is little doubt that her sentiments were shared, if not for the most part inspired, by the Queen, who thoroughly disliked this double-dealing minister. As time went on, without any signs of Northumberland's release, or the mitigation of his fine, the Countess (in her new character of docile wife) strove to conceal the increasing anger and bitterness which she felt towards the King's first adviser. But neither dissimulation nor self-restraint were natural to her, nor could she wear these disguises long. The day came when neither the wishes of her lord nor the Queen's advice could curb her temper further. Some new evidence of the Treasurer's perfidy being brought to light, she ordered her coach and drove to Whitehall, resolved once and for all "*to give the Ferrett a nipp.*"

She found Salisbury walking up and down in the orchard;² and with her usual impetuosity, demanded that he should at once prove his friendship for Northumberland

¹ Northumberland to the King, Jan. 7, 1608; *Original State Papers*.

² The same orchard in which the ministers held hurried council after Elizabeth's death.—*Memoirs of Sir R. Carey*.

by procuring a reduction of the Star Chamber fine, or else lay aside the mask which he had hitherto worn, and openly avow himself as the enemy of the man whom he had wronged. Countess Dorothy had as sharp a tongue as any woman in England; and when Salisbury proceeded (in that imitation of his father which he affected) to make some would-be subtle rejoinder, my lady assailed him with a torrent of reproach and invective. In vain he tried to speak—he whose lightest word had weight in Council and Star Chamber. The sister of Essex was not to be silenced, so she said, "*by any Cyssle borne.*" Nor did she mince matters in telling the Lord Treasurer of his "*manifold base treasons.*" If he had never been told the truth about himself before, he was told it then. It is somewhat to be regretted that we have no complete account of what occurred between the enraged wife and the betrayer of her husband; but we know that after enduring the soundest of verbal castigations, Salisbury at last took to his heels and fled. It is a picture worthy of a Hogarth—the little Treasurer, sallow-faced and baleful-eyed, shrinking before the attack of the wrathful Countess, while, at discreet distances, among the apple-trees of Whitehall, foreign envoys and underlings of the Court make believe to hide their merriment! A man is never so ridiculous as when publicly and deservedly castigated by a woman; and if that woman be fair to look upon, as was this daughter of "the handsome Devereux," the sentiment of the spectators is all the more in her favour. Lord Salisbury's frame of mind, when he beat an undignified retreat before this fair virago, could hardly have been an enviable one.

His first act, upon reaching the private apartment allotted to him, was to issue orders that never again, under any pretext, was Lady Northumberland to be admitted to his presence.¹ He next sent one of his secretaries, Sir William Wade, to the Tower with instructions to seek out Northumberland, and insist upon the latter's reproving his wife for her conduct in thus shaming the

¹ Sir Alan Percy to Sir Dudley Carleton, Sept. 1606.

chief of Council in a public place. It is likely, however, that either Lady Northumberland or the Queen found means to communicate with the Earl before Wade arrived with his budget of grievances; for the prisoner was by no means disposed to gratify his "*verie good frende*,"¹ Salisbury, by administering the desired rebuke; and gave it as his opinion that, if the Countess had erred at all, it was through love for her husband, and a very natural impatience at the lukewarm policy of his former associates.² To this the Lord Treasurer made answer, by letter—undated, but almost certainly written in the same month (September 1606):—

"When I sent unto you by Sir William Wade, a relation of my Lady's sore dealing with me, in myne own Perticular, I intreated him to lay this first Foundation: that I made no Complainte, nor could say anything but that which must increase your Lordship's Affection towards her whom, in all my Observations, time hath discovered to be a loving, careful, and a worthy Wife to your Lordship. My End was onely to infuse into your lordship some little part of that which I found convenient you should know; seeing the strange course that was taken with me. . . But truely, my Lord, I see that there remayns yet some Dreggs of the Discourses which Sir Walter Rawlegh and others have dispersed of me, that the way to make me break my Pace is not always good Usadge, but sometyme to be spoken to in a high Style, which Aspersion (seeming to savour of servilitie) I was desirous that your Lordship should know, when my Lady should give you any account of her Talent, that though I forbare to returne any one harsh Word to the contumelious Language she used in chardging a man of my Place to be one of those that used to devise Causes and Cullurs and Trickes to procure Favour and the contrary, whenever I listed; yet I had shown no such Stupiditie as not to declare unto her Ladyship that I heild my-selfe no way tyed to medle with your Lordship or her Perticular beyond the Incidents of my Place, further than I might list, or

¹ Salisbury thus signed himself in writing to Northumberland, at the very time when he was most busily plotting his ruin.

² Northumberland to Salisbury (Copy); *Alnwick MSS.*

could or should, be deserved by good Usadge; a matter which I know your Lordship can well conceive, who knows best the true Wisdome of Friendshipps, and uppon what grounds one man is to expect from another the effects of private Affection. Although my Ladye's bitter Wordes hath done Harm to your Cause, yet they should be of no Consequence to move me to doe, or not to doe, anything therein, further than I should see just cause at any Tyme. I have ever honoured her Vertue, and will doe soe still (though I am not suche a Stock not to see her Passion) how much soever it may please her to injure me.

"Your Lordship's loving Friend to Command,

"SALISBURY." ¹

Northumberland does not appear to have replied to this characteristic epistle; nor did he reproach his wife for the zealous manner in which she had carried out her intention of "*giving the Ferrett a nipp*." Salisbury could see no way of avenging himself directly upon the Countess; but there were indirect means by which he might make her feel his spite, and thus teach her that the "nipped" ferret can bite shrewdly in return:

The fall of Northumberland involved many persons equally innocent, among others his brothers Alan and Josceline Percy, and his secretary, Dudley Carleton. It is stated in the "Dictionary of National Biography" ² that Carleton resigned his secretarial duties in 1605, and went abroad as companion to Lord Norris.³ The precise truth seems to have been that, when Northumberland was sent to the Tower, Carleton (while still considering himself in the Earl's service) obtained leave from his patron to accompany young Norris to the Low Countries, France and Spain. The travellers had reached Paris on their return journey, when Carleton

The Earl's
friends
suffer for
his sake.

¹ Lord Salisbury to Northumberland (undated); *Original State Papers*.

² Art. "Dudley Carleton," by Rev. A. Jessop, D.D.

³ Afterwards first Earl of Berkshire. He was great-grandson of that Henry Norreys or Norris who suffered death in 1532 as an alleged paramour of Queen Anne Boleyn.

was summoned to London by an urgent order of Council. Unconscious of having in any degree offended, he hastened home, only to be placed in close confinement in the bailiff's house at Westminster. One of the charges brought against him was to the effect that he had been concerned in renting the house occupied by the conspirator, Thomas Percy, next to Westminster Hall. He was several times brought before the Council, and subjected to severe examinations ; but the result was only to establish his complete guiltlessness, and he was released from arrest. This liberation Dr. Jessop declares to have been due to "Salisbury's favour";¹ but so far as can be discovered, the Lord Treasurer showed no more favour to Dudley Carleton than he did to Alan or Josceline Percy, and only set the Earl's secretary free because he could in nowise connect him with the Gunpowder Plot. Indeed while the two latter had the Queen to help them, Carleton was possessed of but scant influence ; and Salisbury was thus enabled to successfully debar him from all Court offices, and to prevent Lord Norris from giving him further employment abroad—surely an unusual way of showing "favour" to a young man so deserving.

Finding himself thus under a ban, because of his connection with Northumberland, Carleton wrote to the Tower asking for some post upon the Earl's country estates. Already weary of politics, he wished to turn "country farmer." Northumberland, who fully recognised the talents of his secretary, and rightly judged that the latter's sphere of action lay rather among courts and cities than in retirement, hastened to make Carleton an allowance, and to reply to him in the following kindly terms :—

"Carleton ; As desperatiō hathe made yow a Monke, so hathe Necessite made me a Prisoner, patient ; and so, by Consequent, hathe given a Crosse Byte to many that had any Dependency or Hopes vppon me. If it had proceeded out of myne owen Fault, I shoold haue bene sorry for my selfe ; but since it

¹ *Dict. of Nat. Biography.*

is not, I can beare it as a Misfortun of the World whiche we are all subiect too. That grieffe that stickes by me is for other Mens sakes, that hathe deserued as littell Euyl as I haue donne. The Strength of myne owen Mynde none knowes soe well as my selfe; and it is very stronge against all but that whiche others suffer for me. If I had been maculated with dishonest or false Thoughts to the King, or my Cuntry, none could haue spyed it sooner than your selfe; and so enoughe for that Matter.

"But thoughe you had runne into a Course of traouelling abroad better to enable your selfe, yett can I not but thinke of you as one had Dependency of me; and althoughe you knewe (what) my Mynde was euer, and soe gaue I you Freedom to doe the best good you coulde for your selfe, to whiche I euer promised my helping Hand; soe now, since you haue suffered with me, I can but adde to that Charite rather than to substracte from it; for I must nedes see that the Court Gates are shutt vppon you for my sake, and Trauell abroad is barred you out of the same Consequent. Theas Disputes with my selfe makes me enter into the Examination of your selfe and me relatiuely; of my selfe and my Estate; of you and the Means I may employ you in. Hopes I haue none left for being any Medler in Matters of State, so long as I liue; and euery Day soe long as I doe liue, I shall be lesse fitt by Reason of my Imperfection of Hearing, and olde Age, whiche will comme vpon me daly, desiring rest out of his owen Nature. Your Endeours hathe bend them selves most that Way, and I holde it Pitty that thos Parts should be lost in you. I wold those that might make Vse of you, knew you but as well as I doe.

"Well to conclude, I am of the same Mynde I was euer of: I leaue you to your owen Lyberty, and your beste Means to doe your selfe Good, to whiche I will put my helping Hand by all Means I can. If it shall pleas the King to giue me Lyberty to Lyue at myne owen House, comme, and you shall be welcom if you be not otherwyse provided. Besides, in the meane Tyme, thoughe my Means are littell to doe good for any, yett as a Badge that you are one of mine, somewhat yerely shall be allowed you, with out any tying you from any other Course.

Out of myne owen Businesses yow know how I can, or what is left for me to employ any man : for yow to become now a Cloune,¹ nether is proper for those Endeavors you haue begunne with, nether is my Estate sutche as I know well how to place to your Contentement. The whiche I will adde is noe more but to helpe yow from sinking for the Present, without any Barre of farther retching out my helping Hand to yow hereafter, if Fortun make me myne owen Man againe.

"Soe I rest, this 20 August

"NORTHUMBERLAND." ²

The Earl's brother, Sir Alan Percy, wrote to his friend Carleton about the same time, but in lighter vein. Alan Percy had just succeeded in winning a victory over Salisbury, and was in high feather for that reason. He desired to laugh Carleton out of his project of a country life; but there is a decided flavour of sarcasm in his letter: "*I am sorry that yow are soe near to be Jacke out of Office, yet yow need not despair of making a Fortune without either digging or begging; for . . . I doubt not but by the helpe of some of my Frendes, which my attendance at Court hath purchased me, to procure yow one, though it be but to attende the King's dogges; which yow must rather obtain by Favor than by Merit, your experience hath bine soe small in such waightie Affaires! Thinke uppon this, if the rest faile; for the Dogges run very fleet, and lykelie the sooner to come to Promotion.*"³ At such a Court, indeed, the dog-leech was as likely to win royal favour as the honest statesman.

Ill as Dudley Carleton fared, his case was not so hard as that of many another follower of the Earl. When all Northumberland's offices of state and crown lieutenancies were taken from him under the infamous Star Chamber decision, the patronage connected with them was of course also lost. The new grantees, frequently Scottish lords with hosts of needy dependants, had no notion of allowing

¹ *i.e.* a country clown, or rustic. The allusion is to Carleton's expressed wish to turn farmer.

² Northumberland to Mr. D. Carleton, Aug. 20, 1606; *Original State Papers*.

³ Sir Alan Percy to Mr. D. Carleton, August 1606; *State Papers*.

the deputies and agents of their predecessor to remain in enjoyment of their posts ; and thus hundreds of those who had served not only the Earl of Northumberland, but his father before him, were deprived of the means of subsistence. High and low, gentle and simple, these unfortunates turned to the prisoner of the Tower, their late patron, for aid and consolation. It is only justice to Northumberland to say that he behaved to every man who had been cast adrift in this way with a generosity as great as his own circumstances would permit. The comptroller rolls of Alnwick are crowded, at this time, with grants of private pensions to persons who had suffered in his service. These entries read alike save for the names and conditions of the interested individuals, and the amounts allotted to them. For instance, on December 4, 1606, we find a grant to "*Sir George Whitehead, of an annuity of £20 in consideration that he hath been dispossessed of his post of lieutenant of Tinnmouth Castle, the keeping of which it hath pleased the king to take awaie from the saide Earl.*"¹

Before Carleton was summoned home from Paris, the Earl's brothers Alan and Josceline were arrested, and seem to have passed some time in the Westminster bailiff's house as prisoners. They too were released after the collapse of the Crown case against them, but all their offices² under the King were declared forfeit, and they were warned to keep away from Court. This was the period during which Alan Percy wrote his jesting letter to Carleton. The jocular spirit died in him, however, when he found that Salisbury meant, if possible, to make his exclusion from Court permanent, and his hopes of preferment impossible. Both Alan and Josceline were Catholics ; and they now recklessly resolved to forswear their native country and enlist in the service of some Catholic power. They had, in fact, taken steps for the

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

² Sir Alan Percy was Lieutenant of the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, and both Josceline and he had held sundry small posts at the Earl's nomination.

sale of their annuities,¹ with the intention of joining the Spanish army in the Low Countries, when Northumberland heard from his wife of what was afoot, and succeeded in dissuading them from their purpose.² The Queen also interfered in their favour (thus once more crossing Lord Salisbury in his designs), and they were permitted to return to Court, where Alan at least soon recovered lost ground, and therewith his old bantering spirit.

As was only to be expected, the army of pensioners which now existed on the Earl's bounty proved extremely costly to maintain. Northumberland's debts, Increasing debts; and a family misunderstanding. already large (owing to the interrupted building operations at Syon, and the sudden loss of his wardenships), now threatened to attain proportions which would bring him to bankruptcy. Neither his friends nor himself at first imagined that the Crown would demand immediate payment of the £30,000 fine in which he had been condemned. Rapacious as was the Tudor dynasty, its successive sovereigns had always been willing to collect large fines by instalments; and the Earl believed that, if he could not secure a reduction of his forfeit, reasonable time would at least be allowed him to raise it. James, however, acting upon the advice of the Lord Treasurer, notified the Earl that he would be content with nothing but an immediate settlement of the vast claim in its entirety. In vain was immemorial custom appealed to; in vain did the unfortunate prisoner plead for leniency. Lord Salisbury replied that "his Majesty the King could in no wise depart from the sentence of the Council." Unless the £30,000 (an almost impossible sum for a subject to raise) was speedily paid into the Treasury, sequestration of the Northumberland estates was openly threatened.

The Lord Treasurer, for his own reasons, made no secret of this decision, and took good care that the Earl's

¹ Left to them by their father, the eighth earl, and subsequently added to by their brother.

² *Original State Papers*, Nov. 1606.

creditors (hitherto patient enough) were fully informed of the Government's intentions. A natural result was that Northumberland and his representatives were at once besieged by a clamorous mob of persons holding bills against the estate. The amount of these claims exceeded, according to the report, £7000,¹ which brought the Earl's total indebtedness up to £37,000. He wrote manly letters to all his private creditors, stating his exact position, and assuring them that, whoever suffered, they should not. In order to bear out his words, he at once proceeded to negotiate for the raising of sums sufficient, at the worst, to satisfy his more pressing obligations. It is not quite clear what were the precise steps taken;² but the Earl had not gone very far in his dealings with the money-lenders, when he discovered, to his amazement, that some person was making use of his (Northumberland's) name, while deliberately working against him in the financial world. The identity of this mysterious (though, as it subsequently appeared, well-intentioned) marplot was soon disclosed. He proved to be Lord Knollys, maternal uncle of the Countess of Northumberland.³ Misunderstanding the conduct of his wife's relative, and believing that the latter had been set on by the Court party to injure him, the Earl despatched a letter of protest to Knollys. "*I am sorry,*" he wrote, "*that your Loth and I should meete in a Bargaine to marre one anothers Marckett, to make it for Strangers. I will not beleve but there lieth under this proceeding some unnaturall Secrett, which yett appears not.*"⁴

¹ The Earl's statement of his debts to Lord Knollys; *Alnwick MSS.*, vol ix.

² The main intention was, however, to raise funds by means of mortgage, perhaps upon the (unentailed) Syon estate.

³ Sir William Knollys, created Baron Knollys in 1603 (and afterwards raised to the dignities of Viscount Wallingford and Earl of Banbury), was son of Sir Francis Knollys by Katherine Carey, and thus uncle of Lady Northumberland, and the second Earl of Essex.

⁴ Northumberland to Lord Knollys, Feb. 3, 1608; *Alnwick MSS.*, vol ix.

Lord Knollys, in reply, assured the Earl that he had no wish to interfere with his projects, but had merely moved in the matter with a view to securing for Lady Northumberland and her younger children a suitable provision "*in case the worst should come to passe.*" He added that it was his intention to settle some of his own property upon his niece and her offspring. So far all was well, nor could any one object to such a line of conduct; but unfortunately Knollys (who appears to have been a benevolent busybody, frightened by the rumours of Northumberland's threatened bankruptcy) took occasion, at the close of his long letter, to complain that the Countess was not allowed enough money to maintain herself with due dignity in the face of the world. There is nothing to prove that Lady Northumberland herself authorised, or was even aware of this interference on her behalf; indeed she appears to have been quite satisfied with the allowance made to her by her husband. Knollys evidently embarked in the affair on his own responsibility, as in point of fact he admits in his letter to the Earl. While Northumberland was grateful enough for the interest shown in his family's welfare, he naturally resented the imputation that he had been guilty of stinginess in his domestic arrangements. In his answer to Knollys,¹ he endeavoured to show the falsity of such a charge. Having first heartily thanked his relative, and apologised for misconstruing the latter's recent action, he went at great length into his own affairs, and showed that he could not by any possibility increase Lady Northumberland's already large allowance. The epistle sheds an interesting light upon the amount of expenditure recognised as suitable to a great lady of the time:—

"I am sorry that I must nowe talke off Pence and Haulffpence to cancell this Imputation—a Discourse fitter for a Huswife to looke on, then a Councillor off State; and that I am forced to proue myselff a reasonable Man, and that I understand myselff, iff I haue not loste my Wittes;

¹ Dated Feb. 14, 1608; *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. ix.

but since their is no Remedy, this I must affirme uppon mine Honor :

"Shee (my wyfe) is allowed £1300, yearely, £500 of her Ioincture, and £800 besides ; two faier Houses, Essex House and Sion, with all Furnitures fitt for them and her use ; although for the one some parte off the Rent shee doth defray ;¹ Litters, Barges, Coaches (one excepted, I doe thinck shee did buy), Coach-Horses for herself, Hackneis for her Seruantes, all Stable Chardges, either in Towne or out of Towne defraied off what kind soeuer ; all chardges of Lienges in, as Midwives, Nurses Wages, Nursing Children abroad, Apparrell, and all Necessaries belonging them ; then againe a dozen Seruauntes besides her owne Famely,² as Gentlemen of the Horse, Coachmen, Porters, Groomes, Workefolkes for her Kitching-Gardens that are employed in theis Seruices, alwaies ready to attend her which neuer costes her Meate nor Money ; as also Schoolmasters. It costes me £400 this laste yeare paste in building off Bathing-Houses,³ Cabinettes, and other thinges Shee had a fancy to, which this 15 yeare before was neuer miste nor wanting : nor haue I spared to satisfy her Contentment, or Delightes, in any Workes since my Troubles, though I had laied aside all manner off Buildinges.

"I say againe, I am ashaimed to talke of Pence and Halff-pence . . . iff it were not to aske your Lordship whether you call this suffering Penury ; and hathe shee not £5000 or £6000 in her Purse able to purchase thinges over my head ? . . . Doe you call this Groning under the Burden of Penury, that must manifest itself to the World, though shee be silent ?"

Knollys having withdrawn his opposition, and apologised in turn, the Earl was enabled to raise various small sums, sufficient to satisfy his more urgent creditors. The Crown fine, however, continued unpaid ; and although the Queen held out hopes that James would soon relent, the gates of the Tower remained obstinately closed upon their prisoner.

¹ Essex House was only rented by the Earl and Countess.

² i.e. her immediate attendants, such as serving-women, tyre-women, &c.

³ Baths.

There is no doubt that the King did at this time manifest a disposition towards clemency in Northumberland's case; but just when the Earl's expectations were raised to the highest pitch, the royal mood suddenly changed, and James declared that until the last penny of the £30,000 fine had been handed over to the Exchequer, there should be no talk of pardon. Lord Salisbury no longer attempted to conceal the fact that the King had acted upon his advice in the matter; and to a bitterly reproachful letter from Northumberland he returned the cool reply that he could not "conscientiously" interfere to mitigate what in his opinion was a just punishment. So the Earl lingered on in prison, with Sir Walter Raleigh and other victims of the Lord Treasurer's jealousy and hate.

The King's fickle nature, however, was well known to Salisbury; and he took measures from time to time to keep James's anger inflamed against Northumberland, lest otherwise the Queen's persistent intercession might carry the day. For this reason the hare-brained scheme of Alan and Josceline Percy to take service under Catholic Spain was made much of; and most disingenuously, Salisbury represented to James that the Earl had encouraged his younger brothers to abandon England. Later on the King was informed that Northumberland was raising considerable sums of money for his own delectation, without making any effort to pay the fine imposed upon him; and this although the Treasurer well knew that every penny thus acquired was spent in staving off bankruptcy. In February 1611 an anonymous pamphlet made its appearance, denouncing the Earl in the most violent terms, and pretending "*interior knowledge*," on the writer's part, of many facts intimately connecting him not only with the Gunpowder Plot, but with other "horrible Popish treasons." The style and wording of this production are curiously suggestive of Attorney-General Coke. It had a wide circulation, and did the Earl much harm. On February 19 he wrote to his friend (and

The Earl's
enemies and
their base
instruments.
The case of
Elkes.

former custodian), the Archbishop of Canterbury, protesting against the unsubstantiated charges with which the pamphlet was filled.¹ It had been published by one Francis Burton, a bookbinder in St. Paul's Churchyard; but Northumberland could probably have hazarded shrewd guesses at the names of its author and instigator.

The sensation caused by the appearance of "Burton's Tract," as it was called, had hardly begun to abate at Court, when another and more determined attempt was made by the Earl's enemies to compromise him, and even to compass his death as a traitor—for such must have been the result had this foul intrigue succeeded. A man named Timothy Elkes was the person chosen to "denounce" the Earl. This fellow, a former lackey of Northumberland, had been discharged for insolence some months before; and it was while indulging (after the fashion of his kind) in abuse of his late master, and making sundry loose accusations against the latter, that this likely instrument of vengeance was discovered by my Lord Treasurer's agents. Very little persuasion was needed to change Elkes from an utterer of tavern slanders, into a "*voluntarie accuser of Northumberland.*" He declared that he "*went in feare of his life,*"² dreading that the Earl would have him put to death in consequence of the "terrible secrets" with which chance had made him acquainted. A special Council was called to hear the "evidence," the King himself being present. Briefly Elkes accused Northumberland of direct complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, and repeated the old, exploded story of his having been warned of the intended blow by Thomas Percy. In addition, the "witness" claimed that Captain Whitlocke, who was at Syon with the Earl and Percy on Nov. 4, 1605, was aware of the secret, but had been bribed by Northumberland to keep silence.³ Whitlocke, it may be remarked, was dead when his name was thus made free with. The direct

¹ *Original State Papers*, February 19, 1611.

² Evidence of Elkes; *Domestic State Papers, James I.*, vol. lxx.

³ *Domestic State Papers.*

examination of Elkes by Coke, Northampton, and Sir Francis Bacon passed off without a hitch; and it was decided to bring Northumberland from the Tower to listen to these grave allegations. The Earl accordingly journeyed to Whitehall, probably by barge. It was the first occasion upon which he had left his prison for five years. The King and judges, we are told, found him "*much changed; reserved, cautious and timid in his answers.*"¹ His shoulders stooped, and his face was pallid from long confinement. The State Papers do not relate in what manner James received the man whom he had treated so unjustly; but it is not unlikely that his Majesty was impressed by the Earl's altered appearance, for during the subsequent cross-examination of Elkes, he commanded the witness somewhat sharply to be careful, and "*speake only the truthe.*" Northumberland contented himself with repeating his former evidence in rebuttal of the charge of complicity. Elkes then made another statement, to the effect that, after his master had been placed under arrest, he (Elkes) had been sent to Sir Alan Percy with a message urging the latter to avow himself responsible for the admission of Thomas Percy to the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners. It is difficult to see what bearing this message had upon the actual Plot; but Coke and others appeared to think it a most important point. Northumberland, when called upon, fully admitted that he had sent to Alan Percy, but only to request that he should be prepared to bear his due share of the blame for the conspirator's irregular entry into the King's service. Had he wished to convey a secret or incriminating message (he pointed out), it was hardly likely that he should do so by word of mouth, or that he should select as messenger a person like Elkes.

After this, the case for the prosecution rapidly went to pieces. The King, after bidding Elkes tell the truth or else hold his tongue altogether, showed plainly that he gave little credence to the so-called "informer." Taking their cue from him, the councillors present unanimously agreed

¹ Northampton to Salisbury; *State Papers*.

to dismiss the charges as either baseless or absurd; and Coke, who had been prominent in conducting the attack, now wrote to the Lord Treasurer that "*the least men acquit Northumberland of all blame.*"

Salisbury himself remained at Hatfield during the inquiry, giving out that he did not wish to take an active part in proceedings so largely instigated by himself. It is possible that he had no desire to meet Northumberland face to face. That Elkes lived under his protection both before and after these abortive proceedings is indicated by the fact that, immediately after the Lord Treasurer's death, this lying and treacherous lackey fell into distress, had his goods seized for debt, and was forced to fly the country. During 1611 and 1612, however, while his patron was still at the head of affairs, Elkes lived in flourishing circumstances, and (in spite of his contemptuous dismissal by the Council) had the effrontery to write several letters renewing his charges against Northumberland.¹ On January 27, 1613, the defeated false witness makes his last appearance upon the stage of public affairs. He writes over that date to Thomas Lumsden, gentleman of the Privy Council, and one of the dead Salisbury's *protégés*. He is, he declares, "*compelled to leave England to avoid the practices of his adversaries.*" He "*cannot sustain his suits*" (for rewards claimed by him, and promised by the Lord Treasurer) "*against so great a man (as the Earl of Northumberland) without the King's special grace.*" For this reason he requests money of Lumsden to take him overseas.² He managed in the end to make his way to Leyden, and thence to the Massachusetts Colony—in which latter godly settlement he thrived as an herb of exceeding grace.

The collapse of the Elkes case called for elaborate explanations on the part of Lord Salisbury, not only to the King, but to various foreign courts which began to show

¹ *Domestic State Papers.*

² *Ibid.*

renewed interest in Northumberland's affairs. From the Spanish Court (where the Earl had many warm friends, and whither James had already begun to cast his eyes with a view to some future alliance) came more than one expression of surprise and displeasure that a man repeatedly proved to be innocent should remain a prisoner, and almost an outlaw. In order to prevent any formal protest from this source, Salisbury sent to Sir R. Winwood, British minister at Madrid, one of his familiar epistles, carefully prepared with a view to mislead, full of prevarications, and intentionally overlooking both the main points of the case and the decision arrived at by the judges. The letter, which professes to be a full and unprejudiced statement of the recent proceedings, may stand as a good example of the method in which facts were transmuted in the Cecil crucible :—

" The Earl of Salisbury, to Sir R. Winwood, his Majesty's Minister at the Court of Madrid :

" Because you may have heard some Bruite touching the Earl of Northumberland's late Examination ; and knowing how various a Discourse a Subject of this Nature doth begett, I have thought good (though there be no other matter for the present to make this the occasion of a Dispatch) as well to acquaint you with our Home Occurrences in the exchange of yours from abroad, as to prevent any erroneous Impression, by this breife narrative of the true Motive and Progress of the Busyness.

" There is one Elkes, a Servant to the Earle, and one who it seems was no Stranger to his Secrets, who hath of late complained to a private Friend (that yet hath kept the same with no great privacy) that he stood in some Danger of his Life, seeing that he observed his Lord's Affection to be grown cold towards him ; which he conceived could proceed from no other Cause but Jealousy, lest he should reveal some Secrets which he had revealed unto him concerning the Powder Treason. Thus much being discovered, it could not be avoided to draw the same into some further Question ; yet with such Caution as was requisite when the Accusation is but single, and the

*Accuser Servant to the Person accused. The Issue hath been that the Earl hath confessed two things in Substance: one, that, after he was committed to the Tower, and before he came to the Star Chamber, he wrot to his Brother, Sir Alan Percie, to take it upon him, that by his Means, Percie¹ was admitted a Pensioner and suffered to escape the Oath. The other, that he was acquainted with the Hireing of that House from whence the Mine was made. Both these, you may remember, were by him very stiffly denied heretofore; and, though they be not of such nature, in regard they do not necessarilie inforce the Knowledge of the Fact, as to call him to a further Tryall for Life or Landes, yet they serve to justify the former Proceedings, those Points being now cleared, which at that Time were but presumed."*²

As for Northumberland's "confession" that "he was acquainted with the Hireing of that House from whence the Mine was made," all that transpired in his examination was that he had been aware of his agent's intention to rent a residence at Westminster, so as to be near the scene of his duties, and had sanctioned that apparently innocent project. This very natural admission, Salisbury ingeniously twists into a most suggestive appearance of guilty foreknowledge on the Earl's part! The second Cecil was hardly so great a master of statecraft as his father, but there were certain qualities in which he surpassed the latter. It will be observed that in the letter to Madrid, nothing is said of Northumberland's "acquittal . . . of all blame,"³ and of the manner in which Elkes's statements were discredited by the Council. Indeed a person accepting this missive as a true history of the affair would naturally come to the conclusion that, in place of being completely vindicated, the Earl had been forced by his servant's evidence to confess to new and serious offences. The remark that these "*Points . . . now cleared*," served "*to justify the former Proceedings*," and to establish the charges "*which at that*

¹ Thomas Percy.

² Winwood's *Memorials*, vol. iii. The letter was dated July 25, 1611.

³ Attorney-General Coke's statement to Salisbury.

Time were but presumed," was surely a blunder on the part of the cunning Salisbury; for it proves the extraordinary fact that Northumberland had been condemned, fined, and imprisoned for faults which had never been proved, but only "*presumed*" against him.

By similar means, we must suppose, the King was induced to alter the intention which he had formed (after the Elkes Inquiry) of "*showing some grace*" to the Earl.¹ Both the Queen and Lady Northumberland spoke so confidently of the royal inclination towards clemency, that Northumberland once more addressed an appeal to his sovereign. That he entertained great hopes may be judged from the tone of his letter, which was that of one who holds himself punished undeservedly, and who expects redress. He thanks James warmly for the fairness with which the Inquiry had been conducted, and for the manner in which "*that Viper, his Seruaute, whose Mallice is soe apparent,*" had been sternly commanded to speak "*no more than the truth*"²

The appeal proved to be so much waste paper as far as the King was concerned. With a malignancy that lasted as long as life itself, Salisbury rose from a sick-bed to strike his last and hardest blow against the unhappy prisoner in the Tower.

Five years had now gone by since Northumberland's sentence in the Star Chamber, and as yet his forfeit of £30,000 remained unsatisfied. As we have seen, his offers to settle the great fine by instalments (according to the custom followed under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth) had been rejected by the Lord Treasurer's advice and influence. He could not, without involving his family in ruin, contrive to pay the whole sum at one time; and so the matter had dragged on for years. The time had now come, however, when, in Salisbury's opinion, the Crown should enforce its claim.

The Earl's
estates
sequestered
by the
Crown.

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. lxxv.

² *State Papers.*

In July 1611 (after Elkes's perjuries had failed of their intended effect) the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Julius Cæsar) was ordered to write a peremptory letter to the Earl demanding immediate payment of at least £20,000 and adequate security that the balance would be paid within a few years. Otherwise, declared the Chancellor, the Percy estates would be sequestrated. Northumberland at first regarded this as a mere threat to frighten him into straining his resources to the utmost. He replied that £20,000 was still a vast amount of money to a man in his position, at whom the "*traffickers in loans*" looked askance.¹ Nevertheless he believed that he could comply with the Treasury's demands if a little additional time were given him. This reply was probably the one expected and desired by Salisbury. No further warning was sent to Northumberland, and the Lord Treasurer prevailed upon James to order that the estates of this obstinate debtor should be declared sequestrated to the King's uses. The actual instrument of sequestration was signed on March 7, 1612;² and this proved the first intimation which the Earl received that his landed property had been seized upon by the strong hand of the State.

Under the scheme drawn up by Salisbury, and thus made law, the various baronies and manors owned by Northumberland were leased out to the King's Receivers-General in the various counties where these possessions lay. Yearly sums were to be collected by the lessees, and, after the deduction of certain percentages, handed over to the Treasury. In the county of Northumberland, for instance, Ralph Ashton the younger, Receiver of Crown Revenues, was appointed Farmer-General over the Baronies of Alnwick, Warkworth, Prudhoe, and Rothbury, and the manors of Charleton-in-Tynedale, Corbrigg, &c. Out of these properties he was to collect annually, until further

¹ *Alnwick MSS*, vol. viii.

² *Domestic and Treasury State Papers*.

notice, £243. 11s.¹ Similar leases were issued with regard to the Cumberland, Yorkshire, and Sussex revenues of the Earl: and this high-handed plan was put into execution without delay. Salisbury, although seriously (and as it proved mortally) ill, could not deny himself the satisfaction of negotiating and granting every one of the leases. It must have galled him that he could not touch Syon House, or the private estate of his particular enemy, the Countess of Northumberland. But, before death carried him away, he had signed and sealed the last of these documents of sequestration.² From his quarters in the Tower, Northumberland wrote to his dying foe a letter of stern remonstrance. He had no wish, he said, to fling reproaches at a man almost *in extremis*, but he could not but loathe the treachery which had counselled the King to take such a step. Salisbury he had always looked upon (in spite of evidence to the contrary) as a friend. He had rejoiced, and assisted to the best of his ability, in the Lord Treasurer's advancement. And when Sir William Cecil was elevated to the ranks of the nobility, the writer reminds him that "*wee joyed to have you of our Societie.*" The letter was written in April 1612.³ On May 24 Salisbury died, leaving the letter unanswered.

The decease of their arch-opponent aroused the Earl's friends to fresh efforts. On June 12, 1612, Lady Northumberland addressed a moving petition to the King, on behalf of herself and her children. The Queen presented this memorial in person; and James is said to have received it favourably.⁴ On the same day he received a letter from Northumberland, entreating him to listen to the prayers of the Countess and consent to set aside the scheme of sequestration.⁵ The writer asked nothing for himself; indeed he expressed himself as willing to suffer life im-

¹ *Alnwick MSS.* (Sequestration Leases).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Alnwick MSS.* (Copy).

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. x.

⁵ *Ibid.*

prisonment, if only his wife and children were restored to the family possessions, and the Star Chamber fine reduced to a sum which he could pay without becoming bankrupt. The effects of Salisbury's death were at once perceptible in the Council when James proposed to extend tardy relief to the imprisoned nobleman and those dependent upon him. No more denunciatory pamphlets were solemnly read,¹ and no "fresh evidence" professing to connect Northumberland with the Gunpowder Plot came unexpectedly to light. In fact the Councillors, with one or two exceptions, agreed that the time had come to moderate the Earl's penalties. There was enough of the old Cecil leaven remaining, however, to prevent James from treating the House of Percy with any great generosity. The terms offered were that one-third of the fine should be remitted, on condition that the Earl gave guaranteed bonds for the payment of the balance (£20,000)² in yearly instalments of £3000—that is to say, charged his estate with the payment, for nearly six or seven years, of an annual fine equivalent to £15,000 in money of our time. The sequestration was "to continue in force until the entire claim was satisfied"—an extraordinary proviso in view of the demand for "guaranteed bonds," and one which practically nullified this so-called "*gracious Reduction*." For, unless Northumberland had full control of his estates, he could hardly contrive to raise the large yearly amounts bargained for by the Crown. It was in truth a typical Stuart "concession"—half-hearted, and contradictory in its terms. Against the cruel absurdity, both Northumberland and his wife at once protested—the lady in terms which showed at once her outspoken nature and the low opinion which she entertained of the King's character. We find her scoffing openly at his Majesty's "*pretended wants*" and general avariciousness. "*God forbidd,*" she adds, "*that one or two*

¹ The pamphlet printed and circulated by Francis Burton, a few years before, had been produced and read in Council, as though it were weighty evidence instead of mere vituperation.

² Equal to at least £100,000 of to-day.

*poor Creatures should suffer because your Ma^{ty} Coffers are empty."*¹ The Earl, for his part, contented himself with a dignified remonstrance, and with hinting that the Crown Receivers appointed under the articles of sequestration were growing needlessly rich, not only at his expense, but at that of the King as well. These worthies were supposed to receive two shillings in every pound of rent which they collected; but as they enjoyed the use of the money for twelve months before turning it over to the County Courts, and were accustomed to lend large sums at interest for their own benefit, it is easy to see what a profitable traffic was theirs.

Whether James was moved by Lady Northumberland's plain speaking (and he prided himself at times upon a relish for bluntness), or whether, as is more likely, he saw the justice of the Earl's remarks and began to doubt the integrity of his Receivers, it was not long before he offered a further and more reasonable concession. On payment of £14,000 he was willing, he declared, to remove the sequestration, and grant a full quittance of the debt. To these terms Northumberland lost no time in replying. He thanked the King cordially; but argued that even this greatly reduced sum was difficult of immediate collection by a person situated as he was. However, in order to meet James more than half way, he was willing to make over to the Crown the only part of his property which had not been affected by Salisbury's vindictive measure, and which thus still remained wholly at his disposal. This was none other than the estate and mansion of Syon. "*Syon, and please your Ma^{ty},"* he writes, "*is the onlie Lande I can putt away, the rest being entayled."*² The building of Syon House alone, he continues, had cost him over £9000; while the lands, as then rented, were "*worth to be sold £8000, within a little more or lesse."* The joint

¹ Lady Northumberland to the King; *State Papers*.

² Syon had been granted by the King to Northumberland personally, and not settled upon his heirs. He could thus sell or bequeath the property as he saw fit.

value of house and lands would certainly cover the reduced fine. "*In humble Maner therefore,*" he concludes, "*I lay the same at your Ma^{ty} Feet, to give your Ma^{ty} Satisfaction.*"¹

This offer the King declined, probably through a feeling of shame at the thought of receiving back a gift which he had himself bestowed for services rendered. It was difficult, however, to refuse a settlement of the affair so convenient (and, at the same time, so little affecting the interests of Lady Northumberland and her innocent children) without taking one more step in the direction of clemency. Accordingly James consented to receive £11,000, in addition to the moneys already collected by the Crown Receivers,² as payment in full of the Earl's fine. Northumberland succeeded in adequately guaranteeing this sum; and was accordingly granted, under Letters Patent of November 8, 11th of James I., what was termed a "*Full Pardon and Release.*"³ This document merely related to the financial penalties inflicted upon him. The obnoxious sequestration was cancelled, and the Star Chamber fine satisfied. But nothing was said or done with regard to the Earl's release from the Tower—indeed he had yet nearly nine years of imprisonment before him, although he had been given to understand from the first that his captivity was to terminate upon the payment of his fine. He had confidently looked forward to freedom; and had even begun to make arrangements for a departure from the dreary quarters which he had then occupied for over seven years. Great indeed must have been his disappointment when he found the Tower gates closed as sternly upon him as ever. But pride forbade any reminder to the King upon this head; nor would the prisoner permit his wife to make further appeals in his behalf. Now that the position of his children was assured, and their inheritance freed from debt, his own freedom mattered little.

¹ Northumberland to the King, April 14, 1613; *State Papers*.

² About £3500.

³ The original preserved among the archives at Syon House.

There was another point, however, upon which he did not hesitate to approach the King. In spite of the "*Pardon and Release*," he still remained debarred from all offices under the Crown, including those which had been made hereditary in his family by royal grant. Northumberland claimed that these latter, or a certain one of them at least, should now be restored him. The fact that he was a prisoner need not by any means militate against his due fulfilment of their functions, since it was customary to appoint deputies in such cases. The governorship of Tynemouth Castle he was particularly desirous of recovering. This dignity had been settled by Elizabeth upon his father, with reversion to himself; and James had renewed the reversion in favour of the young Lord Percy—thus practically making the custody of the castle a family heritage for at least three generations. Under these circumstances, the Earl held that Tynemouth wardenry was distinct from the other and uninherited honours which he had forfeited. The King refused to see matters in this light, and named the Earl of Dunbar governor of Tynemouth. Northumberland then wrote to Dunbar, laying the whole facts of the case before him. The Scottish Earl at once generously withdrew from the governorship, and urged James to bestow it upon "*the rightful inheritor*." But his Majesty merely censured Dunbar for his pains, and, still ignoring Percy claims, placed Sir William Selby in the coveted post. Northumberland sent two more letters of remonstrance, without avail,¹ and then allowed the matter to drop. During the remainder of his long stay in the Tower, he did not again address the King directly.

An account of Northumberland's strange life in the Tower of London has been purposely delayed until this stage of the narrative, for the reason that it was not until after the payment of his fine that he became really resigned to prison life, and set about making for himself

¹ Northumberland to the King, Nov. 19, 1614, and Feb. 20, 1615; *State Papers*.

a home within the lowering bastions of the old fortress. No historian of the Tower has omitted to dwell upon the

How the Earl was lodged in the Tower. Earl's sixteen years of durance in a place so full of bitter associations for one of his name and kin. To him, in truth, the grisly stronghold must

have seemed a haunted spot—haunted by the ghosts of many sufferers whose chains had been broken long since by the hand of death. It is one thing to regard those walls, as we do to-day, with a feeling of romantic interest in the past; and another to look upon them, as Henry Percy of Northumberland must have looked, while still they were the prison and the torture-room of an almost irresponsible sovereign. There the Earl's own father had died a bloody and mysterious death scarce twenty years before. Thence his grandfather, Sir Thomas Percy, had been dragged, with his companions of the Pilgrimage of Grace, to suffer for their faith upon the scaffold. Thence too, but a little while before, Lady Northumberland's brother, the rash, the brilliant Essex, went to his doom; and in the little church of the prison his bones had been laid hurriedly by night, not far from those of the murdered eighth Earl of Northumberland. Sir Ingelgram Percy's pathetic "*Saro Fideli*" appeared but freshly carved upon the wall of the Beauchamp Tower. Sturdy Sir John Perrott had not long ceased his restless pacing to and fro upon the inner ramparts; and in the little garden at the foot of what we now call the "Bloody Tower," Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham—companions of the Earl's youth, and victims like himself of Lord Salisbury's malevolence—still daily met, and whiled away the hours.

The notorious Waad, Raleigh's cruel persecutor, was Lieutenant of the Tower when Northumberland made his first appearance there in the character of a prisoner.¹ Waad was little likely to harass and humiliate the Earl, as he did Raleigh; for the former was still in possession of a

¹ The Earl had been used to frequent the Tower Muniment-Room for the purpose of archaeological research, and perhaps also for the opportunity thus afforded of obtaining speech with Sir Walter Raleigh.

large rent-roll, and the Governor of the Tower, like him of the Bastille, fattened upon what he drew from the purses of his wealthy charges. Still his choice of apartments for the new prisoner (if, indeed, his choice at all, and not that of Salisbury) was an ill-omened and most inconsiderate one. The Earl was lodged in the Garden Tower,¹ where twenty years before his father had been done to death, either by his own hand, or by that of Hatton's agent. Little wonder that the son of the unfortunate Earl Henry shuddered to find himself among such surroundings, and that, as soon as he realised how protracted his confinement might be, he sought eagerly for permission to change his quarters. It was but natural that he should prefer not to allude to the terrible tragedy which had taken place in the adjoining rooms. When he applied to the Council for new apartments it was ostensibly for reasons of health and comfort. His appeal was as follows:—"It pleased y^r Lordships when you were last here, amongst other Speeches, to say if I wanted anything I might complain and let your Lordships know of it. Now, my Lords, as the Summer groweth on, I find this little Garden² that lieth all the Day upon the Sun, to be very close; these Galleries,³ very noysome with the Savours from the Ditches,⁴ and Invalidities oftener to threaten me than they were wont.

"These lower Parts are so wet after every Shower of Rain, as there is no stirring in the Garden; neither is the Air so wholesome as the Hill. Therefore, if it please your Lordships that I may have the Benefitt thereof, as other Prisoners hath had, being here in the same Nature that I am, I shall acknowledge myself much favoured.⁵

¹ The Garden or "Bloody" Tower was situated between the main entrance to the fortress and the Governor's house, directly overlooking the fosse and the river beyond.

² The small garden already alluded to, and called the Lieutenant's Garden, which stretched northward from the foot of the Garden Tower.

³ The walk along the ramparts of the inner Ballium between the Garden Tower and the Governor's house. On these galleries Raleigh afterwards paced, while great crowds watched him from the river below.

⁴ The Tower Moat, which then completely girded the fortress.

⁵ Northumberland to the Council, May 9, 1606; *State Papers*.

The Council could not well refuse this request, more especially as Northumberland's trial by the Star Chamber had not then taken place, and he still technically unconvinced. Orders were accordingly given for his removal to the "Hill" or northern part of the Tower; and the entire Martin Tower was assigned to him for a residence. The Martin (as a glance at a plan of the fortress will show) was a mural tower, situated at the north-east angle of the inner wall, "*over against the Green Mount.*" Beyond it were a parade ground and the outer Bailey Wall; and beyond these again stretched the fosse or ditch (very wide at this corner) and the open fields. The house was large and secluded, and the vaults beneath being exceptionally strong, it was afterwards used as a treasury for the Crown jewels. Here, in the reign of Charles II., occurred Blood's dare-devil attempt to steal the regalia, and here the amusing vagaries of the "Tower ghost" are supposed to have taken place. Among the notable prisoners who had occupied these quarters before Northumberland, were Lord Rochford, Norreys, and others connected with the "crimes" of poor, foolish Anne Boleyn. In later years Archbishop Sancroft was to be lodged here, under less tragic circumstances.¹ The situation was an elevated one. From his favourite promenade (presently to be described) along the inner Bailey "gallery," the Earl could overlook upon one side the inner ward of the great prison. The roofs of the gunners' houses were immediately below him, while the huge mass of the White Tower raised itself in the foreground. On the left, along the wall, was the Constable Tower; while on the right were the Brick and Bowyer Towers, with the Church of St. Peter-*ad-vincula* (where his father's bones reposed) standing in the midst of its plot of green. But the captive was less likely to dwell upon this prospect than upon that which lay beyond the outer wall and moat—the Minories and East Smithfield (hamlets then), and the wide green countryside, the farmsteads, villages, and woodlands that spread to-

¹ Hepworth Dixon; *Her Majesty's Tower*.

wards leafy Epping, Bow, Stratford, and the Essex plains.

To this day the name "Northumberland's Walk" is applied to the "gallery" or footway which runs along the battlements from the Martin Tower to the Brick Tower. The Earl was also accustomed to exercise himself upon the wall between the Martin and Constable Towers; but the first-mentioned promenade was his *par excellence*, and in the course of his long imprisonment he came to look upon the narrow causeway almost as private property. Indeed, when years and suffering had greatly increased his natural testiness, we read that on one occasion he violently assaulted a fellow-prisoner who ventured to trespass upon the spot.¹ But there was another reason for this ebullition of temper than the mere objection to find his domains invaded. The person whom he attacked was Patrick Ruthven, youngest brother of the last Earl of Gowrie.² Ruthven, while an exile at the English Court, had grossly insulted Northumberland by accusing him of having lampooned a lady of virtue who had rejected his addresses.³ The arrival of James I. in England, and the committal of Ruthven to the Tower, prevented a hostile meeting at the time. But when the attainted heir of Gowrie, forgetting the old grudge, made his appearance in the sacred Walk, Northumberland fell upon and soundly thrashed him.⁴

The sequel of the affair is unreported; but Ruthven and his assailant were released from the Tower in the same year (1622). Special permission was granted to the Earl to pave and otherwise arrange the Walk according

¹ Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton; *Original State Papers*.

² When John, third Earl of Gowrie (son of Rizzio's murderer), was killed in 1600, he left two surviving brothers, William and Patrick, who found a brief asylum in England. One of James I.'s earliest acts was to order the arrest of these fugitives. William escaped overseas, but Patrick was seized and cast into the Tower, where he remained from 1603 to 1622. After his release he married Elizabeth, Lady Gerard, and, after a career of strange vicissitudes, died in 1652, an inmate of King's Bench Prison. His only son Patrick afterwards assumed the title of Lord Ruthven; and his daughter married Vandyck.

³ *Cabala*.

⁴ Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton; *Original State Papers*.

to his liking, and at his own expense.¹ In Pepys' Diary it is stated that a large stone was erected at one end (close by the portal of the Martin Tower), upon which were carved the armorial bearings of the House of Percy, together with "*holes to put in a peg for every turn they make upon that walk.*"² The device of these pegs suggests the mathematical bent of Northumberland's mind. One wonders how many such reminders he placed in the sculptured stone between 1606 and 1622, and how many "turns" he made with his friends upon the pavement of the Walk within that weary time! On the southern face of his "house," looking towards the Constable Tower, he caused to be erected a sun-dial, the work of his friend and *protégé*, Harriot. This relic still survives, and its gnomon throws its changing shadow for all who choose to look; just as the Earl's jealously guarded Walk is free to the curious world.

The coming of Northumberland to the Tower had an immediate and extraordinary effect upon the life of the place. He found his friends Raleigh, Cobham, and Grey (the latter his neighbour in the Brick Tower) living a life of stagnation and wretchedness. Raleigh, harried by the spiteful Lieutenant Waad, and well-nigh hopeless of better things, seems to have passed his waking hours brooding in his apartment, or walking listlessly in the "*little Garden that lieth all day upon the sun.*" No thought of the "History of the World" had as yet crossed his brain. Cobham and Grey, who had a keen relish for outdoor sports, found nought to please them in these narrow courts and echoing corridors. No doubt the Earl, coming freshly from the outside world, recognised and pitied the state of lethargy into which they had fallen. At all events he set himself from the first to change the conditions of their lives, to make their lives worth the living in fact, and to save them from the Slough of Despond. The sour Lieutenant had first to be won over; but sundry judicious gifts (such as "*two pendant*"

The Wizard
Earl works
changes in
the Tower.

¹ *Rolls of Syon House.*

² *Pepys' Diary*, vol. ii. p. 314.

rubies,"¹ by way of earrings, to Mistress Waad, the official's daughter) soon produced a noticeable effect in this quarter. A considerable portion of the Governor's perquisites was derived (as in the Bastille) from the profit made upon food supplied to prisoners. Northumberland, however, desired to keep his own table; and made arrangements to this effect with Waad, paying that worthy £100 *per annum* for the privilege, in addition to the charges for "*cookinge and storinge*," which were considerable. He also bought much of his wine from the Lieutenant, who had private means of obtaining foreign commodities brought to the port of London. In these and other ways Sir Arthur Waad made a large profit out of the generosity of his rich prisoner, and was, for the latter's sake, inclined to be more complaisant to Raleigh and the others. Permission was granted to the four friends to exchange visits; but, as the Martin and Brick Towers were much farther from the Lieutenant's house than the quarters occupied by Raleigh and Cobham, it was more usual for them to meet upon the Earl's Walk than in the garden of the Bloody Tower. For the purpose of drawing Cobham and Grey out of the apathy into which they had fallen, Northumberland had a bowling-alley laid down,² and introduced tennis, battledore, and even fencing³ (although anything in the nature of a weapon was supposed to be forbidden among the prisoners). Raleigh's melancholy was of a sort that these pastimes could not charm away; yet we shall see that even in the case of Raleigh the Earl succeeded in reviving dead ambitions, and reviving them so effectually that Sir Walter awoke from his dreams, and, since he could not wear the sword, turned manfully to win a new fame with the pen. "Northumberland, the Mæcenæ of the age," writes Lingard, "converted that abode of misery into a temple of the Muses." Raleigh was gradually inspired by the genius of the place; at first he endeavoured to solace the tedium of confinement by the

¹ *Syon House Rolls*.

² "Paid for making a Bowling Alley in Lord Cobham's Garden in the Tower, £14, 8s. 9d."—*Syon House Rolls*.

³ *Ibid.*

study of chemistry; thence he proceeded to different branches of literature; and two years before his enlargement published his celebrated "History of the World."¹

No sooner was Northumberland established in the Martin Tower than he proceeded to surround himself anew with the companions who had shared his scientific and literary studies at Syon. Prominent among these were the three men whom Raleigh, beginning to take a languid interest in their researches, happily styled "*the Earl's Three Magi*." The name, which became a byword in the Tower, was applied by Sir Walter to Thomas Harriot, Robert Hues, and Walter Warner. Harriot, described by Wood as "the Universal Philosopher,"² was unquestionably the greatest English mathematician and astronomer of his day. Northumberland assigned him a private laboratory and sleeping apartment in the Martin Tower, and the philosopher voluntarily accepted prison life, so as to be near his friend and patron.³ During his residence there, from 1606 to 1609, he kept up a continuous correspondence with Kepler on various subjects of deep scientific interest.⁴ From the Tower he went, in 1607, at Northumberland's expense, to Ilfracombe, in order to make an observation of the comet afterwards called "Halley's."⁵ Between December 1610 and January 1613 he is said to have made 199 observations of sun-spots. Harriot exercised considerable influence over Sir Walter Raleigh, with whom he had made a voyage to Virginia, and through whose influence he had been placed upon Northumberland's pension list.⁶

The second of "*the Earl's Magi*" was Robert Hues,⁷ also a mathematician, but chiefly remembered as a geographer. He had been confided to the care of his present

¹ *History of England*, vol. vii. p. 198.

² *Athena Oxon.*, ii. 230.

³ H. Dixon; *Her Majesty's Tower*.

⁴ *Kepleri Opera Omnia*, vol. ii. pp. 67-74.

⁵ *Dict. Nat. Biography*, art. "Harriot."

⁶ Harriot received a pension of £120 from the Earl. He died in 1621, shortly before Northumberland's release (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*), although De Fonblanque (*Annals of the House of Percy*) represents him as accompanying his patron to Petworth in 1622.

⁷ 1553-1632.

patron by Lord Grey after the latter's committal to the Tower. Hues became tutor to the young Lord Percy, whom he accompanied to Christchurch.¹ The trio of wise men who most frequented the Martin Tower was completed by Walter Warner, alchemist and philosopher. In addition to these, a number of learned persons visited the Earl from time to time, assisted in his experiments, and remained for long or short periods as members of the singular academy which held its deliberations regardless of stone walls and iron bars. There was Nicholas Hill,² the eminent philosopher and exponent of the Atomic Theory, who was afterwards forced to fly overseas because of his obstinate adherence to "the Romish persuasion"³ and to whom Ben Jonson alluded in one of his Epigrams:—

"those *atomi* ridiculous,
Whereof old Democrite and Hill (Nicholas)
One said, the other swore, the world consists." ⁴

There was Nathaniel Torperley,⁵ rector of Salwarpe, in Worcestershire, and a renowned mathematician. There was Thomas Allen,⁶ antiquarian and philosopher, who had refused a bishopric under Elizabeth because of his Romanist views.⁷ And there was Dr. John Dee the astrologer-physician, now very old and feeble, who came from Richmond to visit his "*brother wizard*."⁸

For the due reception of these worthies, Northumberland converted the chief rooms of the Martin Tower into laboratories and libraries. A quantity of important books were removed thither from Syon; and "retorts, crucibles, alembics, zodiacal charts and globes" and human skeletons⁹

¹ *Dict. Nat. Biography*.

² Died in exile at Rotterdam in 1610.

³ Wood; *Athena Oxon.*

⁴ *Epigrams*, No. 34.

⁵ 1542-1632.

⁶ 1542-1632. Wrongly called by De Fonblanque "James Alleyne."

⁷ *Dict. Nat. Biography*.

⁸ H. Dixon; *Her Majesty's Tower*.

⁹ Dr. Turner, the Earl's physician, supplied him with skeletons.—*Syon House Rolls*.

occupied every available space. The honest warders and gunners of the Tower grew more and more afraid of the "Wizard Earl" and his mysterious, long-bearded familiars. Whispers went around of the "*black magick*" that was practised in the Martin Tower, where pale, ghostly flames were seen to burn through the watches of the night; and whence at times loud explosions startled the tramping sentinel, or strange, witching odours were wafted forth—the odours of "*the noxious weed Nicotian*." For the Earl had brought his love of tobacco to solace his prison life; and Raleigh, Cobham, and he consumed great quantities of the herb. About £50 per annum was paid for Virginian tobacco from Northumberland's exchequer;¹ and it would, no doubt, have grieved the soul of Britain's canny King had he paid a sudden visit to his state-fortress, and found these condemned lords puffing placidly at their great pipes, and expelling cloud after cloud of the fragrant smoke which his Majesty abominated. On the whole, but for the oppressive sense of restraint, life was not unpleasant for these noble captives. Before long Raleigh was deep in the concoction of a "*Greate Cordiall*" which was, he hoped, to prove the *Elixir Vitæ*;² while Harriot and Northumberland corresponded week after week with Johann Kepler (then the ill-paid astronomer-royal of Rudolph of Hapsburg) "on things of higher moment than the intrigues of a Court; on the laws of vision; on the cause of rainbows; on the sun-spots which Harriot noticed before they were seen by Galileo; on the Satellites of Jupiter."³ They were also busily employed upon "the theory of numbers, to which Percy (Northumberland) had given a good deal of his time. In the pursuit of such studies, what to the Wizard Earl were the rivalries of Buckingham and Hay?"⁴ Before 1614 the Martin Tower had become so crowded with learned sojourners from the outside world, with books, and with the paraphernalia of Science, that the Earl was

¹ *Syon House Rolls*. Numbers of pipes and "boxes for tobacco" were also purchased.

² *Dict. Nat. Biography*.

³ H. Dixon; *Her Majesty's Tower*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

obliged to hire the neighbouring Brick Tower from Lord Carew, Master of the Ordnance, whose official residence it was.¹ Hither the young Algernon, Lord Percy, was brought, in or about 1612, so that his father (who distrusted the educational powers of women²) might personally superintend the boy's early training. For the benefit of his heir he now resumed and completed the MS. "Instructions to My Son," which had been commenced at Syon years before.

Northumberland had never been a believer in the theory that asceticism promotes intellectual strength; and, like most of the great English wits and scholars of the day, he looked with no unfriendly eye upon the comforts and convivialities of the table. In the Tower his hospitality was well-nigh as abundant as it had been at Syon or Essex House, albeit the guests bidden to his board were not so numerous. The cost of his larder and cellar, while he remained in prison, rarely fell below £1400 a year³—that is to say, about £7000 in modern money. His wines were of many kinds, including "*French, Rhenish and Greek, with Muscatel, Hypocras, Malmsey, Canary, and Sherrie.*"⁴ For the benefit of his friends and visitors he went to the expense of keeping three stables of horses—one on Tower Hill, another in the Minories (within sight of his daily promenade), and a third in Drury Lane.⁵ A number of servants were employed to wait upon him and his guests; but on account of the scanty accommodation in the Martin and Brick Towers, most of these lodged without the walls, in the Minories, Tower Hill, and St. Katherine's.

Northumberland had established a large library at Syon before his imprisonment. While in the Tower he

¹ *Her Majesty's Tower.*

² See his frequent strictures on the sex in *Instructions to My Son*, extracts from which are given later.

³ *Rolls of Syon House.* This included supplies to servants.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

spent, on an average, £200 a year in the purchase of books,¹ chiefly works upon Philosophy, History, Medicine, Theology, and Horticulture, in English, French, Italian, and Latin. Books were continually being transferred from Syon to the Tower and from the Tower to Syon, hundreds of volumes at a time. A list of some of these, preserved in the Syon House MSS.,² shows the miscellaneous nature of the Earl's readings. It includes the Bible (in Italian); the Iliad; several works on occult philosophy and witchcraft; Marinello on "*Les Maladies des Femmes*," and the same author's *General Medicine*; treatises on gardening (one dealing with the "*Making of Labirinth*s"); histories of England, by Du Chesne and Daniel; a genealogical and heraldic account of the Spanish Royal Family; numerous tomes dedicated to military science, strategy, bombardment, and fortification; "Florio's New Dictionary"; the Works of Machiavelli; the poetical and prose works of Tasso; and numerous Italian comedies. One looks in vain through the long list of over 200 books for one representative of contemporary English literature.³

In the roll of Northumberland's expenses there is a curious item which leads one to wonder if, by chance, the Earl's mind had forestalled Von Reiswitz in the invention of a Kriegspiel or "War-game."⁴ The entry alluded to is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
"For an inlaid Table for the Practice of the Art Militaire	4	18	0
"For making a Mould of Brass to cast Soldiers in, and making 140 of them, with wire for Pikes . . .	2	16	8
"Making 300 leaden men, &c., with a Box to put them in	1	7	8
"The Table, and Points; and gilding the same . . .	3	17	6" ⁵

¹ *Syon House Rolls*.

² Catalogued "W. II. 1."

³ It should be remembered, however, that this is only one of several such lists. At Syon he certainly possessed editions of Spenser and Bacon.

⁴ Lieutenant Von Reiswitz, of the Prussian army, perfected his War-game in 1824, "after years of study."

⁵ *Syon House Rolls*.

The Earl had almost entirely lost his old passion for dice and cards ; but during his leisure moments he played chess and draughts.¹

Two "readers" were employed, one for English works, the other for Italian and French, when, in process of time, Northumberland's eyesight began to weaken. The Italian reader was Francesco Petrozani, who received £7 and a lodging for his services ; while John Elkes read in English. De Fonblanque² is under the impression that this Elkes was the same discharged servant who had in 1611 borne false witness against the Earl. Such was not the case, however, the name of the discredited traitor having been Timothy ;³ but the two were possibly brothers.

In 1615, when Raleigh was released from the Tower to lead his second ill-fated expedition in search of "*El Dorado*," Northumberland appears to have given up all hope of ever leaving prison alive. In this frame of mind, he proceeded to make himself as comfortable as possible in what he perforce looked upon as his home ; and the incubus of the Star Chamber fine being now removed, his yearly expenditures showed a notable increase. But the fact that he had decided to make the best of his lot hardly justifies many of the large sums spent by him during the following year in apparently wanton extravagance. His bill for personal apparel alone in 1616 amounted to £1000, money of that time ;⁴ and during the summer and autumn months of the same year he laid out £3368 upon silver plate.⁵ In July 1616 he ordered from his goldsmith a "*newe George*."⁶ At first sight these things seem strange in one so opposed to vulgar display as he had hitherto shown himself. Why should a man of his years and habits array himself thus splendidly for the delectation of the sober philosophers who were his principal friends ? Why should he buy gorgeous services of plate, if only for these same unappreciative

¹ *Rolls of Syon House.* ² *Annals of the House of Percy*, vol. ii.

³ See *State Papers* ; Letters and Evidence of Timothy Elkes.

⁴ *Rolls of Syon House.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

scholars to dine upon? And above all, why should an imprisoned nobleman desire to buy new "Georges," and to wear this and the other insignia of the Garter as he paced to and fro in his stone cage? The key to the mystery may be found in the current gossip that Northumberland, like many another before him, had fallen victim to the insidious charms of the beautiful but utterly unscrupulous Countess of Somerset. Lady Somerset, together with her second husband, James's unworthy favourite, had just been committed to the Tower for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. Northumberland had not seen the divorced wife of his nephew¹ for ten years. When he paid her a state visit in the Tower (prepared, perhaps, to remonstrate with her upon the evil courses which had made her name notorious) he was at once captivated by the siren's spells—and "men can hear a siren's sigh farther than a preacher's philippic." It must be pleaded, in extenuation of the Earl's weakness, that since 1606 he had enjoyed no female society, save during the occasional visits of his own wife and daughters; which fact made him a comparatively easy conquest for Lady Somerset. There is no proof that any criminal intimacy existed between them; but the Earl was so infatuated that he encouraged his daughters to visit Lady Somerset daily, in order that he too might have an excuse for paying his respects in that quarter.² Chiefly for the Countess's sake, he showed exceptional civility towards her husband, although in the case of Robert Carr there were strong family reasons which might induce the head of the House of Percy to overlook his ordinary dislike of the King's Scottish followers. Lord Somerset was a son of that chivalrous Ker of Fernieherst who had succoured and sheltered Anne, Countess of Northumberland, in 1572,³

¹ The first husband of Frances Howard was Robert, third Earl of Essex, nephew of Lady Northumberland.

² Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, May 24, 1617; *Original State Papers*.

³ Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester and Earl of Somerset, was son of Sir Thomas Ker of Fernieherst by his second wife (married in 1569) Janet, daughter of William Scott the younger, of Buccleuch and Braxholm.

after her husband's betrayal by Hector Armstrong. In the summer of 1616 we read of Somerset "*with his Garter and George about his neck, walking and talking with the Earl of Northumberland*"¹ in the garden of the Bloody Tower. It was probably this flaunting of the Garter insignia on Carr's part which induced the Earl to order a "*newe George*," fancying that such display was agreeable to "*his dear lady*" (as John Chamberlain calls the Countess of Somerset, in one of his gossiping letters).² The rich raiment and costly plate with which he astonished his learned associates may reasonably be traced to the same cause—*i.e.* a desire to cut as fine a figure as his age would allow in the eyes of the same "dear lady."

Although the Countess of Northumberland still frequented Court, and appeared at most of the masques and other entertainments of the day, she ceased almost entirely to visit the Tower after Lady Somerset was imprisoned there, and a decided coolness once more arose between her husband and herself. When Dorothy and Lucy Percy visited their father, they were no longer accompanied by Lady Northumberland, who sent in her place Penelope Perrott, Lady Gower,³ the daughter of her earlier marriage. In 1617 the Earl gave six shillings to the keeper of the Tower lions,⁴ for showing the beasts to "*Lord Percy, with the*

¹ Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, July 20, 1616; *Original State Papers*.

² To Dudley Carleton, May 27, 1617; *Original State Papers*.

³ Penelope Perrott, sole surviving offspring of Lady Northumberland's mysteriously dissolved union with Sir Thomas Perrott, married firstly Sir John Gower Knt., and secondly (in 1617) Sir Robert Naunton of Letheringham, in Suffolk. Her daughter and heiress by Naunton was another Penelope, who (*like her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother—i.e.* Lady Naunton, Lady Northumberland, and Lady Leicester) was twice married; a curious coincidence surely. Her first husband was Paul, Viscount Bayning; her second, Philip Herbert, fifth Earl of Pembroke. The senior co-heir of this latter marriage was the late Earl Poulett; so that both claimants to the Poulett title—William, styled Viscount Hinton, and the Hon. William John Lydston Poulett of Hinton St. George—are directly descended from the runaway match of Dorothy Devereux and Thomas Perrott, and one of the two is the senior representative of that match.

⁴ Lions were added to the Tower Menagerie in the sixteenth century; and 6d. *per diem* was allotted for the keeping of each beast.

*Lady Penelope, and his sisters."*¹ There are mentions in the Syon Rolls of largesse bestowed at this time upon "*my lady of Somerset's woman*," and "*a servant of the Countess of Somerset*"; but Northumberland bestowed gifts with a most liberal hand upon nearly all the residents of the Tower, from the family of the Governor down to the maids and lackeys of his friends. The warders and gunners of the fortress, in particular, had good reason to regret his subsequent liberation.

After the sequestration had been removed from his landed possessions, Northumberland once more took their management into his own hands; and, considering that he was a prisoner, it must be owned that he succeeded surprisingly well in this difficult work. Warned no doubt by costly experience (as in the case of his kinsman, Thomas Percy of the Powder Plot), he chose as his agents and representatives only those in whom he could impose implicit trust, and whose characters were wholly above suspicion. His chief officers were: Sir Henry Slingsby, of Scriven, for Yorkshire; Robert Delaval, for Northumberland; and John Astell or Astle for Sussex and the southern estates generally.² Sergeant Hutton he retained as his standing counsel in all cases of disputes with his tenantry and neighbours.³ With Hutton, Slingsby, Delaval, and Astell, as well as with Edmond Powton, his steward of the household, and John Hippisley, his gentleman of the horse (the two last-mentioned residing at Syon), he kept up a constant correspondence; and no affair of importance in connection with the property was carried out without his knowledge and consent. Times had changed for the better since it had been possible for Queen Elizabeth and the elder Cecil to seize upon the mines of an Earl of Northumberland without offering compensation;⁴ and coal-fields now formed some of the most valuable of the Percy posses-

¹ *Syon House Rolls.*

² *State Papers*; August 14, 1609.

³ *Syon Rolls*; *Alnwick MSS.*

⁴ See *ante*, under the seventh Earl.

sions. In 1607 the Earl had been glad to let his mines in Northumberland upon lease for twenty marks a pit. So rich was the output of coal that he soon regretted his lack of foresight in not having charged higher rents, or else worked the field himself. In 1619 he gave orders that 400 tons of coal from the Lemmington pits¹ (the leases of which had not been renewed) should be sold at the rate of £3, 3s. 4d. a ton.²

To the best of his ability, he seems to have striven to act fairly by his tenants; but at least one charge of arbitrary treatment has been brought against him in connection with the town of Alnwick. The good people of that place had been accustomed to bake their own bread. Northumberland, however, was induced by certain interested persons to establish a "common bakehouse," which he "farmed out" in consideration of a percentage upon the profits. The Alnwick folk looked askance at this novelty; and continued to make their loaves in the domestic oven, instead of bringing the flour to the "town bakers." These latter made bitter complaint to Master Delaval, and subsequently to the Earl, pleading that they must close their doors if the people continued to ignore them. Northumberland thereupon wrote angry letters to his agent and bailiff, ordering that the inhabitants of Alnwick should be forced to patronise "*the common bakehouse for the benefit of the farmers of the same*";³ and so baking became a monopoly in the district, the poor householders complained that the cost of their living was increased, and the Earl was for a long time most unpopular. To offset such acts as this, there are, on the other hand, many instances of disinterested kindness and consideration towards those who dwelt upon his estates.

The work known as "Instructions to my Son" had been begun by Northumberland after the birth of his first son in 1597, and temporarily abandoned at the child's death

¹ About four miles west of Alnwick.

² *Alnwick MSS.*

³ *Ibid.*

in September of the same year.¹ When resumed and eventually completed for Lord Percy's benefit in the Tower, the "Instructions" were supplemented by a second composition of advice to his son "*in his Travels*." The "Advice" (which will be quoted later in its entirety), was written from a much higher standpoint than the "Instructions," although the latter is in many ways the more curious and entertaining of the two. Both have been transcribed from the original MSS. at Petworth, and published—the "Instructions" by Malone in *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii., the "Advice" in the *Antiquarian Repository*, vol. iv.

Alluding to the noticeable differences of tone and style between the earlier portion of the "Instructions" (written during more hopeful days at Syon), and the parts composed in the Tower, the Earl addresses his son:—

"*Wonder not at the Alteracion of the Style which perhaps you may fynd; for ether I have got mutche since that Tyme in looking after other Matters more of greater Weights, or loste mutche Forme in Phrase, which Youth commonly pleaseth itself with.*" One of the effects, indeed, of his unjust sentence and galling confinement had been to make the prisoner cynical and at times pessimistic in his writings. His slight regard for the character and disposition of women is directly traceable to the facts that he himself had been brought up almost entirely among men, and that his wife's temper had made the early years of their married life a period of continual strife and unhappiness. The chief objects of the "Instructions" are thus set forth:—

"*Ffirste that you (Lord Percy) understand your Estate generally better than your Officers.*

"*Secondly, that you never suffer your Wyfe to have Poore in the Manage of your Affaires.*

"*Thirdly, that your Giftes and Rewardes be your owen, without the Itercession of others.*"

The methods best suited, in the Earl's belief, for dealing with "Servants" (*i.e.* with agents, military pensioners,

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

gentlemen of the household, and secretaries, as well as with the ordinary domestic servants) are described at length. Northumberland holds that to manage such dependents most advantageously, it was desirable to "*let them fynd out that ye nede them nott, and that yf one be gonne to-day, you can make an other do your Business as well to-morrow.*" He looks upon most servants as wanton wasters of their master's substance. They are very jealous of their privileges, and demand them even when they have no need to do so, "*if it be but a Loafe of Bread or a Canne of Bere, which, when they have it they will give it to the Dogges rather than loose it, with a proverb that the 'Lord payeth for all.'*" But it is upon women that the Earl is particularly severe. He admits, somewhat grudgingly, that at the outset they are in many ways almost, if not quite, the equals of men, but adds that the hypocritical and shallow scheme of education by which they are reared causes them to lose speedily a just sense of right and wrong, and to act in accordance with worldly fashion, rather than after the promptings of their own minds and hearts. With women, he writes, the cry is always "*not what is modest for them to doe, but 'sutche and sutche doeth this'; not what is fitt for them and their Children to weare . . . but 'sutche and sutche weares this and that'; not that Paynting is an immodest Ornament, but that 'Paynting is the Fashion'; and so on in general, their Affections founded upon what others do, maketh the Fault appere to them a Fault or not, and not the Qualite of the Fault itselfe.*" At their literary and linguistic attainments he scoffs rather unfairly, for several ladies of the day (and among them his own brilliant and beautiful daughters) were shining examples of feminine learning: *If any doe excell their Fellowes in matter of Languages (as some Ladies do); if it be in French yow shall commonly fynd it noe further improved than to the study of an Amadis; if in Italian, to the reading of Ariosto; if in Spanish, to looking upon a 'Diana de Monte Maior'; if in English, our natural Tongue, to an Arcadia, or some Love Discourses to make them able to entertain a Stranger*

upon a Hearth in a Privy Chamber." In point of fact it is his cynical opinion that women are "*as wyse at fifteen as at fifty*"; and that they make no deep study "*in any Learning saving in Love, a littel Craft, and a littel Thriftiness, if they are so addicted out of Disposition; Handsomeness and Trimness being the Idol of there Hartes till Tyme write deep Wrinkles on their foreheads.*" Some of his own experiences in "wife-choosing" are given (although it will be remembered that Queen Elizabeth had far more to do with 'making the match between Northumberland and Lady Dorothy Perrott, than the bridegroom himself): "*In my Choise of a Wyfe it was long ere I made it; I had told thirty-one years ere I tooke one, my Resolutions being grounded upon these Considerations of Choise;*

"*First, that my Wyfe should nether be oughly (ugly) in Boddy, nor in Mynd.*

"*Secondly, that she should bring with her Meat in her Mouth to maintayne her Expense.*¹

"*Lastly, that her Frenedes should be of that Consequency, that they might appere to be steps for yow to better yowr Fortune.*

"*My first Ende I attayned to; the last I mist and grew out of Hope within one or two Years; for Essex and I were at Warres . . . and Hindrances grew, rather than Love.*"

The Earl is strenuously opposed to the growing practice of settling private fortunes upon wives. All money brought into the family by either of the contracting parties, husband or wife, should, he thinks, belong to the common stock. Neither does he approve of the mistress of a household being permitted "*to Keep the Cofers.*" They are, it appears, over liable to be victimised by designing persons, as, according to the Earl, his widowed mother had been by her second husband, Master Francis Fitton; or else they are naturally extravagant and easily tempted by fine clothes and costly nothings. "*Hardly,*" indeed, "*shall you fynd the Wyfe of a wyse Man the Possessor of ritche Bagges.*" When

¹ Yet Lady Dorothy had practically no fortune, and was obliged to go to law on the hope of recovering the money settled upon her by her first husband.

women save up money, it is rarely for their families, but far more frequently for purposes of personal adornment. Northumberland believes that Englishmen allow their wives too much domestic power. That women should meddle in business matters may be permissible in Germany, "*where the husband's unmeasurable beastliness of drynking causes a necessity for the Wyfe to look to the Businesse*"; but in England a man should be master in his own house and director of his own affairs. As to the duties and pleasures of women, they are soon summed up. They are to look after their children "*in their Long-Cote Age,*" to manage the household servants, to amuse themselves with needlework and female society, "*and to have a care when great Personages shall visitt to sitt at one ende of a Table, and to carve handsomely.*"

There is a wise saying to the effect that the best repartee is that which we think of after the occasion has gone by. Northumberland's advice to his son, with regard to the management of an ill-tempered or hysterical wife, may be shrewd enough; but the Earl himself had not followed it in his own domestic relations. He counsels Lord Percy to preserve a calm demeanour in the face of feminine threats, and to meet the verbal attacks of an angry consort with phlegmatic silence. But so far from baffling Lady Northumberland in this manner, he had invariably allowed himself to be provoked by her bitter words into retorts quite as bitter. Writing from the seclusion of the Tower, however, long after that period of family jars, he adopts a cynically philosophical tone: "*Will you be angry. . . . at a poore Woman that understands littell? . . . I have often knowen Men not replying, Women have chid themselves oute of Breathe.*" In much the same strain he continues that so long as a man can restrain his own passion he is enabled to keep women in subjection. The fair sex is also a foolish sex, and must by no means be taken seriously. An excellent plan to bring home to women their lack of common-sense is (we are told) to treat their extravagant words with silent raillery. Thus it is advisable, when wrathful dames threaten

"to kill themselves, to give them a Knife; if to hang themselves, to lend them your Garter; if to caste themselves headlong out of Windows, to open the Casements; and if to swound and dye, to let them lye till they come to themselves again; soe as to this Daye I can never hear of any that finished by these mournful Deathes."

In spite of his loudly proclaimed disbelief in the capacity of women, it was Northumberland's fate throughout life to find his plans constantly defeated and set aside by female agency. Queen Elizabeth had wheedled him into an unsuitable marriage; his wife for many years openly defied and intrigued against him; and in course of time his two daughters were, one after the other, to marry the men of their hearts, either without his consent, or in direct opposition to his wishes.

When the heir of the House of Percy had completed his English education, and was about to travel overseas, the Earl addressed to him a second document, which is here quoted in full, as a good specimen of the author's literary style:—

Advice to
Lord Percy
"in his
Travels."

"Instructions for the Lord Percy in his Trauells;

GIVEN BY HEN. EARL OF NORTHUMB.

"Yow must consider, the ends of yowr travels is not to learn apische iestures, or fashions of attyres or varieties of costely meates, but to gayne the tonges, that hereafter at yowr leisures, yow may discours with them that are dead, if they haue left any worth behind them; talke with them that are present, if yow haue occasion; and conferre with them that are absent, if they haue bestowed vpon vs any thing fitt for the view of the world; and soe, by comparing the acts of men abroade with the deeds of them at home, yowr carriage may be made cummely, yowr mynde riche, yowr iudgement wyse to chuse that is best, and to eschew that is naught.

"RELIGION is the first thing yow are to vse rightly, to the honor of God; in whiche I doubt not but that yow are soe settled, as I neede but giue this cauiat, that althoughe in ther religion yow shall see many things worthy of scorne in yowr hart, yett doe it not in yowr outward fashions; for soe shall yow free yowr selfe from ther offence; and to dispute to conuert, is fitter for a greater doctor then yowr selfe. Somme churches of our profession yow shall fynd allowed in most places; whiche if yow goe to, besides the benefitt yow shall gett in beinge edyfyed, yow shall meete with very good language.

"For the regiment of your HEALTHe, three things may appeare dangerous; one, the distempers that may groe out of the violense of exercise; the other, drinking of wyne in a country hoter then yowr owen; the last, the excesse of women, ther bodies not being the freest from infections in the world: but in all theas yow must be yowr owen best phisition, as being best able to obserue yowr owen boddy, if yow list; or else yow are lyke to fynd the smart, and noe man will be soe feeling of yowr payns as yowrselfe. Your constitution is moist, and therefore the more exercise will be required.

"In the attayning to the TONGUES, I wishe the foundations may be layd gramatically at the first; whiche with yow will not be a monthes labor, hauing a peece of the scoller: for soe if yow forgett, hereafter yow shall easely renew, and know whether thos that write or speake, doe it rightly. I know that conuersation is the properest for speache, and reading for vnderstanding; but boeth discretely mixt is best of all. A sedentory or a studious lyfe I knowe is not pleasing to yowth; but it will be to age, when yow must sitt out of necessite of affayers, or for ease; and yett that necessite of ease or disease, if drawen on by ouer sitting to yonge, I cannot allow of.

"Emongest the rest of your obseruations, the LAWS of the lands would not be passed over with a careless eye; not that I meane you should labor the whole cours of the ciuill law, by whiche thos kingdoms are cheefely gouerned;

but to read ther statute laws, and customary laws that are most vsed: in this point I fynd our gentilmen to returne home very defectiue and lame; for they nether know the cours of iustisse, nor the custommes of the cuntry, almost in any fashon: therefore would I wishe yow to resort somtymes to ther courts of parlements and other courts of iustisse, by whiche you shall heare the generall causes that are handled, the generall enormities that are prouided for, and soe, by consequent, the generall dispositions of the state; as also your eares shall be witnes of the best deliueryes, and in the best termes.

"The TENURES of ther lands and customs would be knownen, as well in the generall, as of the perticular prouinces, towns, jurisdictions, signoryes; as also in what sort they receaue ther reuenues, whether by way of money, or in kind, or part one way, part an other; what assurances the lord hathe from the tenant, or the tenant from the lord; whether lett for years or for lyues; then agayne, whether they take annuall rents, or fynes, or boethe; then the seruises they owe to ther lords would not be forgotten: ther mannors of sales, assurances, mortgages, yow shall doe well not to be ignorant of, and what the generall rates of ther lands are sold at; the measurings of ther lands, whether by acre, or any other common measure perticular to them selues would be looked into; the nature of ther grounds, whether sandy, grauells, clayes, blacke moldes, heathy, stony, woddy, drye grounds &c. would also be obserued: for soe may yow, by computation, quantite for quantite, consider the yealdings of those states to ours: the quantites of wynes, of grasse, of graynes that ther acres doe yeald, would also be noted; as also to compare the biggenes of ther acres with ours, or any other measures: somme common measure between them and vs would be well examyned, as if of lyquids, by tunnes, gallants, pottells, quartes &c.; if of waights, by pounds, by onces, by drams, by scruples &c.; if for length, by myles, or paces, or feete, or inches, or barley corns &c., must be perfectly vnderstood: the valuation of ther

monyes, how ther parrs agree with ours, is not the least thing to be diued into, if you will be a good commonwealth's man ; for out of theas knowledges that merchants haue aboue vs, they make vs very fooles in the silent and creeping gaynes of a state. In our cuntry, theas things differ almost in euery prouince ; which I wonder the wisdom of our parlements haue not rectefyed to one kind certaine ; since the statutes seemeth soe mutch to haue labored it. Theas things are not difficult to enquier, and they will aske but the enquiring to learn them.

"The principal **COMMODITES** that the Cuntryes afford, is not to be neglected ; as whether it be in wyne, in corne, in cattel, in salts &c. : if of any of theas, then how one prouince assists the defects of the others ; as by the wayes of ther carriages, and by what manor, whether by water or by land ; if by land, whether by cart, by horse, or other portage ; if by water, by what kind of boattes, of floatts &c., and by what riuers, what lakes, what gulfes, and where those ryuers doe discharge them selues. Ther would also be obserued the bayes, the roads ; the hauens, whether deepe, or bard hauens ; as at loe waters, whether the shippes lye upon ground or flott ; how many fawdom at ful sea the water riseth, and what windes they are most subiect vnto ; what number of shipping belongeth to euery hauen, or what gallyes or other boates of portage, and of what burdens ; of what shapes ; how they carry ther fights, and how mand ; by which yow may conieture and gather hereafter the aduantages that one nation hathe of an other in matter of trafick. Manufactures is not the least things to be considered ; I mean not littel manyfactures, but the great ones ; as whether by woolls, by hempes, by flax, by silkes, by mettells, by dyes &c. : by theas yow shall faule into the note, whether theas comodytes are vnted, and what returns they make ; whether in bullon or other wares, and out of what prouinces, states, Kingdoms. From hence will yow be ledde on to conceaue the chepenes and dirths of any staple marchandize or others, and how all theas may be prouided to supply a kingdom, or state. Theas knowledges

will serue for yowr vse when yow groe a settled home man, or when yowr master shall command yowr seruiss for the defence of your cuntry, in the necessite of a warre, or your counsell in the treaty of a peace.

"The PEOPLE is the next thing yow are to passe thorowghe yowr thought, as how sorted into ther kinds; whether consisting of noblesse, artists, trades men, or pesants, or how mixt of any of theas; how eury of theas sorts are employed in the gouvernement of the state, and in whiche of theas kindes the strengthe of ther dominions doe consiste; what is ther force, whether in hors or foote; what is the armes most vsed emongst them, whether the armes is in the hands of the prince, or nobilite, or the commons; where ther magazins are, and in whose hands the welthe doeth moest rest; whether a nation prodigall or parcemonious; if prodigall, in what ther expences and consumptions is most vsuall; if parcemonious, in what is ther gettings and gayne; whether well-peopled, or scant of inhabitans, and if scant of inhabitans, whether the cause procede of the barronnes of the soyle, or want of good portes, or the bordering neighbours by waye of a warre: The manors and fashons of other attyres, whether constant or subiect to change, is worthe the notinge;—ther exercises, and the kinds of them that are most in vse; ther dietts and foodes; whether plentifull or scant, continuall or at tymes, and whether the better sort, or meaner, haue ther excesses in that kind; and then agayne, for ther behauiors, whether light or graue; there humors, whether vpon the cheate, or honest: For ther healthes, as what diseases doe moest raigne emongst them, whether feuers, plagues, goutes, stone, droppesies, or cattarres. Out of all theas considerations shall yow make to yowr selfe sommewhat hereafter, that were to long to expresse in perticular, yett mutche for yowr iudgement.

"Now as touching the enquire of PRINCES and ther COURTS; theas are the mane points of serche and marke; how they are attended by ther nobilyte, if it be a free prince, or if it be a republicke of the chiefe; whoe they

may be; ther alliances; ther sufficiencie; ther powers; ther employments by the state, or ther lyuing of them selues; the provinces, towens, or commandes they are trusted with all; and ther reputations, whether wyse, or weake; valiant, or cowards; riche, or poore; old, or yonge; or whether actiue, or quiet out of nature: what the priuy-counsellors of ther courts are; ther loues or ther hatreds one to another; how the factions of the courts are in power; the officers of the court how disposed; the ordenary expence and reuenues of the kingdom, whether it consist of gabelles, of subsidies, or of reuenues of ther lands, and how managed; are things worthy the knowledge. In cases of offences towards the prince or state; the wayes of ther examynations, ther tortures, ther processes, ther sentences, ther punishments, if found faulty, yow shall doe well to be satisfied in. By theas when yow shall be thought fitt for employment at home, yow shall inable yowr discretion in many cases to giue aduise and gesse at the euent vpon the first motions. Lastely, the general studyes the nations doe affect; as whether it be to the laws, or deuinite, or phisicke, or phylosophy, or to any other arts; as also whether the nobilitye and gentrye are adicted to it for ther satisfactions, or it is the meaner sort that labors it for ther profitt and gayne:

"The vse of MAPPES, whether soe euer yow trauell will mutch steede yow; for by them shall yow receaue sutch an impression of the adiacencies of prouinces, riuers, forts, forests, towns, and places inaccessible, as they will neuer afterward be cancelled out of yowr memory.

"Concerning FORTIFICATIONS, theas few rules are to be obserued: whether they be of the ancient molds, or of the newer formes, or mixt of boethe, as yow shall fynd many; then, agayne, whether regular or irregular; whether of stone or bricke, as most of the olde ones are, or of earthe, as thos in the Loe Cuntryes, or withe rampards or without; then what grounds of commande is about them; the natures of ther earths for approches, or the vicinite of ther couerts for ambushez: whether they be towens com-

manded by citadells, or gouerned by ther owen proper forses : and, lastely, the places of ther situations, ther auenues, and to what end soe placed, must be considered. This doe I thinke sufficient to say of this point in generall ; the more perticulars will appere when yow enter into the art of it ; a subiect better and fullyer tawght vs in vulgar tonges, then in the ancient.

"Ther EDIFICES are ether churches, monuments, palaces, priuat houses of the nobilite, houses in cityyes, or champetres : in this the knowledge of ther kinds, fashons, sumptuosites, and ther expence in building with ther pleasures of gardings, walkes, shelters and comodytes against all weathers, will be of vse to yow, when yow shall thinke yowr owen home your best lodging.

"The WEATHERS, whether constant or changeable, whether moist or dry, cold or hote, the tymes of ther seasons, and winds that most possesse ther skyes, is a knowledge that may giue yow somme aduantage, if euer yow be a discouerer to gesse at that whiche yowr eie seeth not, whether it be a continent or an iland, or an iland of great extent.

"For yowr owen studyes, the TONGES and vnderstanding them must be yowr chiefe endeouors for the tyme ; and yett lett yowr readings be of sutche bookes as yow may gather somewhat else that may serue yowr turne hereafter ; double gaynes vnder one labor being best : soe as I may say, lett yowr conuersation be with bookes euer, with armes when the necessite of yowr cuntry and yowr master's commands requiers it ; and not, *econtra*, armes euer, and bookes when yow haue but neede : for soe shall yow eschew the warning the prouerbe tells vs of ; '*Qui amat periculum, peribit in illo*' : and in the other doe yowrselfe very little good when yow shall haue occasion. Yett withall, armes must not be soe layde asyde, that yow must then but learne, when yow haue neede ; for soe perhappes yow shal betray yowr cuntry in the trust it may trust yow with all, and begett shame to yowrselfe to vndertake a taske yow vnderstand not :—and I know noe surer instru-

ments in learning to wielde all thos well, than arethemetike, geometry, cosmography ; and astronomy in somme measure will serue yow, if yow be a nauigator.

"The exercises I would wishe yow to be most skilfull in, is RYDING, and yowr Weapons ; bycause a skilful sword, in a hand that will not tremble, procures peace often, the want of whiche doeth giue men boldenes to be busy to yowr disgrace or danger : and althowghe I wishe yow a skilfull sworde for peace sake, yett *lett it be slippere sheathed*, if the honor of yowr master, or yowr cuntry, or yowr owen be touched ; for theas are dutyes yow owe, wherein yowr flesche must not be to deere vnto yow.

"In your obseruations of men's MANNORS, BEHAUIORS and FASHONS, if anything seeme to yow absurde, sacrefyce it in yowr thoughts ; for, euery nation esteemes that they are borne to and bredde in the commelyest : soe shall yow auoyde quarrells and braules, whiche if yow enter into, yow will fynde yowrselfe to weake, when noe respecte shall cause forberance, but that yow are a stranger ; and in this, the meaner sort yow will fynd most subiect to error.

"Your EXPENCE, lett it be moderat, and cast asyde the coat yow are borne vnto for a tyme : for to striue with them in ther vanites, yow will not be able to hold way ; besides that yow will want soe mutche at yowr returne, where those superfluities will be better spent, since abroad nothing will remayne yowrs, here in what kind soe euer somewhat, euer remembring that yow must dye an Englishe man ; and to loue yowr owen home best, for I know not where yow can be markt with soe good a blessing as God and yowr cuntry hathe markte yow withall. Yowr habitts would be according to the fashons of the nations yow liue in ; soe shall yow auoyde being gazed at ; thinges to men's eies not vsuall breiding wonder. Nether lett yowr attires be to costely or to many ; for the one will be a consumption without reason, and the luggage of a ward-roppe after yow will be troublesomme.

"To his Maiestye's EMBASSADORS, or others employed

for our cuntry, be very respectfull; soe shall yow be sure to meete with a good report when yow comme home, and they will grace yow what they canne abroad, laynge vpon yow all curtosies. Be louing and open handed to his Ma: subiectes according to yowr means, if yow know them dutyfull and necessitous, rather then giuing gloriously to strangers: for soe, besides the goodnes of the charite, yow will obtaine loue; wher as the others will laughe at yow for yowr bonty: giuing idelly being a falt other nations is not soe subiect vnto as wee are.

"Lastely; What yow obserue of worthe, take notes of; for when yow list to take a rewew, the leaues of yowr books are easylyer turnd ouer, then the leaues of yowr memory.

"To conclude: What I haue deliuered, is but a catalogue of what yow ought to looke into, not how yow are perticularly to follow them; for soe I should be to tedious in my instructions, and take away from yow yowr owen choise, repeating my former labors whiche yow haue more at large other where: thos that attend yow, knowes my desiers at full. And soe I leaue yow to the grace of God, whiche must be the thinge that must sterve yow euer and euer in all yowr actions, and guide me in my aduise."

Sons do not always follow, or even heed, the carefully prepared counsels of their parents; but young Algernon Percy may be fairly said to have obeyed in the main these minute parental *Instructions*, and to have profited abundantly thereby. The advice given by the Earl deserves to be contrasted with that contained in the *Letters* of Lord Chesterfield to his son, published over a century later. Despite the occasional pettiness of Northumberland's strictures upon women, his general sentiments convey a far worthier ideal than do those of Chesterfield; and the comparison is upon the whole greatly to the advantage of the former writer, as a father and a man of honour, if not as a man of "elegance" and wit.

In Northumberland's writings there exists abundant evidence that he looked upon women as sent into this

world fully as much for man's vexation as for his happiness. The long series of disagreements which had taken place between his mother and himself, and the subsequent still bitterer quarrels with his wife, appear **Northumber-** to have rendered him suspicious of the other **land and his** sex, and desirous of keeping them in subjection. **daughters.** Thus while his two sons were elaborately instructed, and given the full benefit of their father's wisdom, his daughters, on the contrary, were kept as much as possible in the background, and only trained in the brief list of accomplishments which the Earl deemed necessary or suitable for young ladies of their age and rank. But the course which the well-meaning father maps out in advance for his offspring is rarely the course which they choose. Dorothy and Lucy Percy had inherited, alike from mother and father, decided wills of their own. They were both beauties—especially the younger, Lady Lucy, who was by many esteemed "the most lovely damsel in all England"; and, as was natural in the children of a Devereux and a Percy, they were exceptionally high-spirited and impatient of restraint. Add to this, that they were gifted with great natural intelligence, and it will be seen that the Earl had anything but an easy task before him when, in his lofty disregard of the feminine mind, he attempted to make them ideally subservient to his wishes. Lady Dorothy was the first of the two to revolt. Her father had issued an edict forbidding her to attend Court without his permission—a permission that was granted grudgingly and seldom, for the Earl feared lest the warm Devereux blood, if submitted to courtly temptations, might betray his daughters into serious indiscretions, as it had done more than one member of their mother's family.¹ Moreover he knew the corruption and extravagance of the society with which the King and his favourites were surrounded, and dreaded to see his maids embarked upon such a sea of perils.

¹ He was probably thinking in particular of the scandals connected with his wife's sister, Lady Mountjoy, and of his wife's foolish clandestine marriage with Perrott.

Accordingly royal masques and similar merry-makings were denied to Lady Dorothy by his orders; and, in case the Countess of Northumberland should disobey him in this regard, he begged his good friend, the Queen, to discourage Lady Dorothy's presence at Court festivities. But here once more the Earl, in his ignorance of femininity, ran counter to the natural sentiments of the sex. The Queen, as well as Lady Northumberland, looked at matters from a woman's point of view, and not from that of a philosopher. Her Majesty's pet weaknesses were love of dress and of gaiety; nor could all the Earl's reasoning make it seem fair to her mind that Dorothy and Lucy Percy should not be allowed to enjoy the delights which she herself prized so highly. Thus it came to pass that, in place of siding with Northumberland on this occasion, Queen Anne aided and abetted the Countess and Lady Dorothy against him. The latter refused to listen to her father, and appeared at Court to such purpose that, before the winter of 1613, rumours were flying thick and fast regarding the many distinguished persons said to have laid their names and fortunes at her feet. At one time gossip had it that Count Henry of Nassau was her admirer. "*There is whispered,*" wrote John Chamberlain to his friend Carleton in August 1613, "*that Count Henry of Nassau hath a month's mind for my Lord of Northumberland's daughter, which, if it should fall out, would be a great match for her.*"¹ The "great match" did not come to anything, however; nor did Lady Dorothy grieve for the loss of this foreign princeling, if indeed she had ever given his attentions a serious thought. In December 1614 Chamberlain the observant informs his correspondent that there was talk of a union between Lord Burghley and the fair Dorothy—"which may" (he continues) "*bring about her father's release.*"² But this affair also fell through; whether because of Northumberland's justifiable hatred of the Cecils, or for other reasons, is unknown. Early in

¹ *State Papers.*

² *Ibid.* Burghley was son of the Earl of Exeter, nephew of Salisbury, and grandson of the first Cecil.

1616 Lady Dorothy was privately married, without her father's knowledge (and probably against his will, for he disliked the Sidneys and Dudleys almost as strongly as he did old Burghley's progeny), to Robert Sidney, son and heir of Viscount Lisle,¹ nephew of Sir Philip Sidney, and grand-nephew of the great Earl of Leicester. Lady Northumberland, however, was aware of her daughter's secret union, the facts concerning which were not divulged until the following year, when the approaching birth of an infant² forced Lady Dorothy and her young husband to make known the truth. Notwithstanding the disapproval of Northumberland, the alliance turned out a most happy one, and is distinguished in history for the number of famous personages which it produced. Among the children of Dorothy Percy and Robert Sidney (who succeeded in 1626 as second Earl of Leicester) were :—Philip, third Earl of Leicester, better known as Lord Lisle,³ the gallant Puritan commander of the Civil War ; Algernon Sidney,⁴ the great Republican, who died a martyr to his convictions in 1682 ; Colonel Robert Sidney,⁵ the reputed lover of Lucy Waters ; Henry Sidney, first Earl of Romney⁶ ; Dorothy, Countess of Sunderland, who lives as "Sacharissa" in the verse of Waller ; and Lady Lucy Pelham, ancestress of Thomas, Duke of Newcastle, and of Henry Pelham.

Hardly was his elder daughter married, than Northumberland began to experience similar trouble with the younger, Lucy. Lady Dorothy Percy had been accomplished and beautiful ; Lady Lucy far surpassed her in both of these qualities. No sooner did she appear at Court, than a positive train of devoted admirers enrolled themselves under her banner. There was no need for the Countess of Northumberland or the Queen to practise the subtle arts of matchmaking in this case ; suitors came all unsought to Lucy Percy. She might, it is said, have married whom she

¹ Created in 1618 first Earl of Leicester.

² This infant was none other than Dorothy Sidney, afterwards immortalised as Waller's "Sacharissa."

³ 1619-1698.

⁴ 1622-1682.

⁵ 1626-1668.

⁶ 1630-1704.

pleased out of the brilliant circle that surrounded the throne; but her choice fell upon the widower, James, Lord Hay, who, although no longer in his first youth, still showed himself handsome of form and face, as he was prodigal of the great wealth bestowed upon him by the King. James Hay had been the first (and perhaps the most deserving) of King James's favourites, after that monarch's accession to the English throne. "The King no sooner came to London," writes Sir Anthony Weldon, "but notice was taken of a rising favourite, the first meteor of that nature appearing in our climate; as the King cast his eye upon him for affection; so did all the courtiers to adore him; his name was Mr. James Hay, a gentleman that long lived in France; some say of the Scottish guard to the French King." Hay was born at Pitscorthy, county Fife, the son of Sir James Hay of Kingask by Margaret Murray, and the grandson of Sir Peter Hay of Megginch.¹ That he was graceful and good-looking may be taken for granted, although during his mission to Germany the Electress Elizabeth nicknamed him "Camelface," from the peculiar shape of his visage.² His early days had been spent in very straitened circumstances; and when through the King's favour he found himself rich and powerful, it became the chief object of his life to efface the memories of past privation by the most reckless prodigality. Advancing rapidly in the royal good graces, he was made a life Baron in 1606, married in 1607 to Honora, daughter and heir of Edward, Lord Denny, and in 1615 created Lord Hay of Sawley. Good-humoured and tactful, he subsequently proved himself a capable diplomatist, and a letter-writer of no mean ability. His one great fault, indeed, seems to have been absolute recklessness of expenditure. In the feasts which he gave to his friends, he aimed at outshining Lucullus. According to Weldon, live sturgeon were imported for him from the Black Sea, and

¹ *Dict. of Nat. Biography*; Douglas's *Peerage*. Osborne sneers at his birth, and calls him the "son of a Scotch merchant."—*Trad. Memoirs of James I.*

² *Ibid.*

served whole at his banquets. In the course of one of his suppers a great pie was served up, composed largely of "*ambergris, magisterial of pearl, and musk.*" This fragrant, but scarcely appetising dish, cost a sum equal to £55 of to-day. Hay's masques were upon a scale of equal magnificence. He leased Essex House, and there played host to King and Court, with extraordinary splendour. Not all of this display, however, was intended for the royal delectation. Shortly after the death of his first wife, Hay fell passionately in love with Lady Lucy Percy, and many of his most gorgeous and costly entertainments were given for the avowed purpose of dazzling the young beauty, as well as her pleasure-loving mother, Lady Northumberland. Rumours of what was going on reached the Earl; and he protested so violently against the courtship of Lady Lucy by one of "*those Scottish upstarts of the Court,*" that his wife shrank from exasperating him by lending open countenance to the love affair of her second daughter, as she had done to that of Lady Dorothy. Nevertheless Hay was secretly encouraged in his suit by the Countess, whose friend Lady Bedford played the part of principal match-maker. It was not long before the favourite learned that his attentions were anything but unwelcome to Lady Lucy; and it was arranged that their betrothal should be announced at a superb festival given for the purpose. On February 22, 1617, John Chamberlain wrote: "*A Masque is to be given at Lord Hays, where the Countess of Bedford is to be Lady and Mistress of the Feast, as she is of the managing of his love to the Earl of Northumberland's younger daughter, with whom he is far engaged in affection, and finds such acceptance both at her hands and her Mothers, that it is thought it will prove a match.*"¹

The masque cost about £11,000 in money of to-day, and kept thirty cooks busy for twelve days; but, in so far as Lucy Percy was concerned, all this outlay of time and money was thrown away. The King and Queen honoured Essex House with their presence, all the fashionable world

¹ Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton; *State Papers*.

was there, but Hay looked in vain for a sight of his lady love. At last Lady Dorothy Sidney arrived, pale-faced and in tears, to inform her would-be brother-in-law that Lucy was a prisoner—shut up with the Wizard Earl in the Tower! It was a curious story, and kept London supplied with romantic gossip for many days. The two sisters, Dorothy and Lucy, had gone to the Tower that day with the intention of pleading in Hay's favour. They assured their father that the young Scotsman was of gentle birth; that his love was wholly disinterested—uninfluenced either by greed or ambition; and that a union between Hay and Lady Lucy might lead to the Earl's release from prison. The last argument had been better omitted. Northumberland's pride was offended at the prospect of owing his freedom to "*a Scots minion*," and he roundly swore that rather than consent to such a match he would remain within the walls of the Tower for the rest of his life. Despairing of winning him over, the sisters prepared to leave the prison before the gates were closed for the day. But Northumberland, who had heard of the great masque at Essex House, was determined that his younger daughter should not attend the festivities. "*After some few caresses, he dismissed his daughter Sidney to go home to her husband, and to send her sister's maids to attend her; for that he meant not to part with her, but that she should keep him company; adding withal that he was a Percy, and could not endure that his daughter should dance any Scottish jigs; and there she remains for aught I hear.*"¹ This was domestic tyranny with a vengeance! The disappointed Hay did the honours of his masque as best he could, although for him that gay scene had lost its chief attraction; while Lady Lucy's "incomparable eyes" were wet, as she pined over her needlework in the lonely chambers of the Brick Tower,² or listened to the homilies of her stern parent. No doubt Northumberland fancied that he was acting very shrewdly

¹ Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, March 8, 1617; *State Papers*.

² The apartments recently vacated by her brother, Lord Percy, had been assigned to her.

in thus separating his daughter from Hay, and making her a captive like himself; but events showed that the methods which he pursued had had anything but the desired effect. However Lady Lucy might have acted had she been left free to decide for herself, this high-handed conduct rendered her more favourably inclined than ever towards her Scottish suitor. Did Northumberland really understand woman's nature he would never have allowed his daughter to consider herself in the light of a martyr. Although the fair captive wept, she did not despair, even when the Earl ordered that her maids (whom he suspected of carrying messages to Hay and Lady Bedford) should not be allowed to leave the inner ward of the Tower. A fortnight after the masque at Essex House, Sir G. Gerard wrote to Carleton: "*The Earl of Northumberland still keeps his daughter, Lady Lucie Percy, in the Tower, to secure her from the addresses of Lord Hay.*"¹ But in spite of all his precautions, the Earl himself was, indirectly at least, the means of bringing about the alliance which he abhorred. Allusion has been made to certain tender feelings inspired in the elderly scientist's breast by the mischievous charms of his fellow-prisoner, the Countess of Somerset. He was now so fatuous as to permit, and even encourage, his innocent daughter to make daily visits to this wretched woman, in order that (as Chamberlain told Carleton) he might himself have a good excuse for dancing attendance upon "*his dear Lady of Somerset.*"² This folly was appropriately punished. Carr's wife, finding time hang heavily on her hands, could not resist the temptation of indulging in another of the conspiracies which she loved—an innocent conspiracy on this occasion, however. While pretending to sympathise with Northumberland, she acted as go-between for the lovers, received letters from Hay to Lady Lucy, and sent out Lady Lucy's replies by her own messengers. The Earl was handsomely befooled, and "*the*

¹ Gerard to Carleton, March 20, 1617; *State Papers*.

² Chamberlain to Carleton, May 24, 1617; *Original State Papers*.

matter . . . so plotted, that where he thought he had his daughter safest, there he lost her."¹ An accident disclosed to him the true state of affairs. Furious at what he deemed the treachery of Lady Somerset, he returned to his old love, science, and visited the Countess no more.² As for his daughter, "seeing that he could prevail no longer with her," he sent her away "without his blessing"; nor would he give her the £20,000 of dowry which he had promised on condition that "she would be ruled by him."³ Hay, however, was by no means mercenary. His affection, says Wilson, "was above money—setting only a valuation upon his much adored bride;"⁴ and no sooner did he learn that Lady Lucy had left the Tower than he hastened back from Scotland (whither he had gone on the King's business), and established himself "in a little house in Richmond Park, to be near Syon where his fair mistress stops."⁵ As Northumberland continued obstinately against the match, and refused to see either Lady Lucy or her mother, the King was induced by Hay to act *in loco parentis*, and give the bride away. James was in Scotland, however, and the ardent swain was naturally impatient. Yet the summer of 1617 must have been, upon the whole, a pleasant one for the lovers, and Lord Hay's barge came and went twice a day between Richmond and Isleworth. There is an element of humour in the fact that Lady Northumberland, appalled by the accustomed magnificence of her future son-in-law's banquets (or perhaps kept purposely upon a meagre allowance by the wrathful Earl) did not venture to ask Hay to dine or sup; so that the young man was compelled to return to his own residence at Richmond, in order to appease his hunger! "*The Lord Hay thinks it long till the King's coming, that he may consummate his marriage; for the King hath promised to give the bride. He is wonderfully observant and obsequious to her and her mother; and spends*

¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, May 24, 1617; *Original State Papers*.

² *Ibid.*, July 5, 1617; *State Papers*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Life of King James I.* Collins, ii. 434.

⁵ Sir G. Gerard to Carleton, July 5, 1617; *State Papers*.

*most part of his time there, having taken Sir Francis Darcy's house, by Syon, where he takes solemn feasts twice a week at least, with that cost and expence that the Lady of Northumberland dares not so much as once invite him by reason of his curiosity; though he be commonly in her house from morning till dinner, from after dinner till supper, from after supper till late in the night."*¹

The wedding was at length solemnised on October 30, 1617. "*On Thursday the Lord Hay married his mistress, the Lady Lucy Percy, and that night the King and Princess honoured his wedding supper with their presence at the Wardrobe.*"² The bride knelt, while James drank her health; and some authorities aver that the King made her as "a bridal present . . . a promise for her father's enlargement from the Tower."³ It was a merry party, and one after his Majesty's own heart. The guests "*ate the wine possett, threw the left shoe, ran at the ring, with other fooleries,*"—

"O' th' sudden up they rise and dance;
Then sit again, and sigh and glance;
Then dance again, and Kiss:
Thus sev'ral Ways the time did pass,
Whil'st ev'ry Woman wish'd her Place,
And ev'ry Man wish'd his!"

The supposed pardon obtained by Lady Lucy for her father (if granted at all) certainly came to nothing at this time. It was, indeed, "an easier task to get a pardon from the King than to induce her father to accept it. Percy would not owe his liberty to Hay; and when the order for his release was read to him, the venerable Wizard, swearing that he would not owe thanks to Hay, went back to his books, his globes, and his Magi in the Martin Tower."⁴ This probably refers to Northumberland's behaviour four years later, when an order for his release

¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, Aug. 9, 1617.

² *Ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1617; *State Papers*.

³ Hepworth Dixon; *Her Majesty's Tower*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

was undoubtedly signed, of which he refused to take advantage. All that James seems to have done at the wedding supper was to make Lady Lucy a promise of her father's pardon; which promise the King, characteristically, took four years to carry out.

The year 1618 witnessed the execution of Northumberland's life-long friend, Raleigh. In 1619 the Earl was to suffer the loss of one still nearer to him—his wife. Lady Northumberland died at Syon on August 3. The register of Petworth records that on August 14, 1619, "*the corps was interred in the Chappell of Dorothe, that thrice honorable and right vertuous lady the Countess of Northumberland.*" Lady Northumberland was aged about fifty-four years, and had been married to the Earl for some twenty-four. Her funeral sermon, preached by Dr. Richard Chambers at Petworth, was printed and published a few months later. It is entitled, "*Sarah's Sepulture; or a Funerall Sermon preached for the Right Honourable and vertuous Lady, Dorothe, Countesse of Northumberland, at Petworth in Sussex, by Richard Chambers, Doctor of Diuinitie.*"¹

The text chosen was Genesis xxiii. 1 and 2:—

"1. *And Sarah was an hundred and seauen and twenty yeares old: These were the yeares of the life of Sarah.*

"2. *And Sarah died in Kiriath-arba, the same is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.*"

It is difficult to understand how these particular verses could have been considered appropriate to the occasion. Neither in her age or general characteristics did Lady Northumberland resemble Abraham's wife. "*Among many mirrors of modesty,*" said the preacher, "*this elect Lady was a true mirror. Had any cause to boast in the flesh? Shee more. Shee was descended of a Princely family, espoused to one of the greatest Peeres in the Land, blessed with an hopefull Seed, grased with all outward lineaments of beauty, and endowed with all outward ornaments of vertue.*"²

¹ Published by G. Eld, London, 1620.

² *Sarah's Sepulture.*

Northumberland was greatly shaken by his wife's death, and reproached himself bitterly with the estrangement which had arisen between them since the secret marriage of their elder daughter, and the Earl's indiscreet admiration for Lady Somerset. So overcome was he, indeed, that his friends resorted to the strange expedient of recalling to his mind "*his former disputes with his wife, in order to lessen his grief at her loss.*"¹ His infirmities increased so rapidly from this time, that (as Lord Hay assured the King) only freedom and complete change of scene could restore him to health. Hay, now Viscount Doncaster,² laboured most loyally in his father-in-law's cause, and good-humouredly excused the latter's discourteous treatment of himself, by pointing out that long imprisonment and many sorrows had naturally spoil the Earl's temper. At last the promised pardon was obtained from the King. "But the old Earl," says Wilson,³ "would hardly be drawn to take a release from his (Doncaster's) hand; so that when he had liberty, he restrained himself; and only with importunity was wrought upon by such as knew the distemper of his body might best qualify that of his mind persuading him, for some indisposition, to make a journey to the Bath." His sons and daughters joined in urging Northumberland to accept the release offered to him; and, after several refusals, he was finally induced to do so.

The Earl left the Tower, his prison-home for more than sixteen years, on July 21, 1621.⁴ Several other distinguished prisoners were liberated on the same occasion, among them the Earls of Oxford and Southampton, Sir Henry Yelverton, Sir Edward Sandys, Captain North, and Mr. Selden. A grand salute of the Tower guns was fired in honour of Northumber-

¹ His tried friend, the Queen, had also died in 1619.

² He was created Viscount Doncaster in 1618, and Earl of Carlisle in 1622.

³ *Life of King James I.* Collins, ii. 434.

⁴ *Records of the Tower.* De Fonblanque wrongly states that the date of the release was 1622.

land's departure; and Lord Doncaster escorted his father-in-law in triumph to Essex House, where his children awaited him. Chamberlain writes: "*On Sunday afternoon the Earl of Northumberland was released from his long imprisonment in the Tower, whence the Lord of Doncaster went to fetch him to his house with a coach and six horses. . . . The warders of the Tower make great moan that they have lost such a benefactor. All the lords and great men about this town go to visit and congratulate the Earl. Lord Arundel supped with him the first night, and dined there the next day, whither came likewise, unbidden, the Spanish Ambassador. The Earl continues at Syon for ten days, then goes to Penshurst, to see his daughter Lisle, and so on, when he thinks good, within his precincts.*"¹ The word "precincts" is in allusion to the fact that, on his first release, Northumberland was ordered to keep away from London, and to confine himself to "*within thirty miles compass of Petworth*"²—a place which he had never cared for, and rarely visited. The cause of this edict was the King's desire to avoid any awkwardness which might arise from a meeting between himself and the man whom he had so long persecuted. The injunction was removed after a few months, and Northumberland was allowed to return for stated periods to his favourite residence, Syon, where he found the gardens which he had laid down in a most flourishing condition. On November 15, 1623, Chamberlain informed Sir Dudley Carleton that the Earl had "*hired Sir Richard Harrison's house in the Minories, and lived there.*"³ It is curious to find the released captive voluntarily returning to the neighbourhood of his captivity—for Harrison's house was within musket-shot of the Martin Tower. There is no mention of his journey to Bath, but he probably went thither as soon as his "precincts" had been enlarged. A story is quoted in Collins' Peerage to the effect that, during his first visit to London, the Earl having heard of the Duke of Buckingham's ostenta-

¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, July 22, 1622; *State Papers*.

² *Ibid.*, July 18, 1621.

³ *State Papers*, November 15, 1623.

tion in driving through the capital behind six horses, immediately ordered that his own coach should be drawn by eight, by way of rebuke to the favourite. Such a demonstration, however, scarcely tallies with Northumberland's character.¹ His principal place of abode after 1622 was Petworth, and most of his books and scientific appliances were transferred thither from the Tower, with considerable difficulty, owing to the proverbial heaviness of the Sussex roads. There was nothing to prevent his claiming his seat in the House of Lords, but no evidence exists of his having done so during the remainder of James I.'s reign. On February 22, 1624, we learn that "*the Earl of Northumberland was either not called to Parliament, or if writs Pro Forma were issued, he had been wished to forbear and absent himself.*"² Even after the accession of Charles I. he seems for a time to have shrunk from parliamentary service, as on January 31, 1626, a Dispensation was issued to "*Henry Earl of Northumberland to be absent from the Parliament in regard of indisposition of body.*"³

One of the most agreeable reminders of the past which awaited the Earl on his return to freedom was a letter of warm congratulation from Sir Dudley Carleton—once his *protégé* and private secretary, now a person of consequence and envoy at the Hague. Carleton (soon to become Viscount Dorchester) assured his old master that he had never forgotten how much he owed to the latter's help in times of need. The Earl, vastly pleased by this evidence of gratitude—a rare quality in those who have risen to place and power—replied from Petworth on August 28, thanking Carleton for his letter, and assuring him that he had more than wiped out any debt which existed between them by his kindness to Lord Percy while abroad. This friendship continued to the end of the Earl's days, and he never failed to offer his congratulations upon every upward step

¹ The *Dictionary of National Biography* and De Fonblanque's *Annals* both suggest that Hay was responsible for the eight horses.

² Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton; *State Papers*.

³ *Domestic State Papers*.

taken by Lord Dorchester. On August 29, 1629, he wrote inviting the diplomatist to visit him at Syon or Petworth, and adding in hopeful words: "*I hope time will bring it about again that we may communicate some old passages, and laugh at what is past, joy at the present, and hope for better to come, which none shall be gladder than your old master.*"¹

James I. died in 1625; and the new King, advised by Buckingham, began at once to make overtures to Northumberland. It was felt at Court that the Percy influence would be of great advantage to the royalist party, and the Earl was urged to take his seat in Parliament as a supporter of prerogative. Twenty years before Northumberland would probably have sided with the King and his advisers as against the claims of the people; but his unjust imprisonment, and the other grievous wounds which he had received from the reigning dynasty, caused him to look coldly upon the interested advances of the Crown party. It was not long, indeed, before he made his voice heard in Parliament as a vigorous champion of the Commons and their privileges, and an opponent of Buckingham's policy. A small body of peers looked upon Northumberland as their leader, the Earls of Arundel, Bristol, and Middlesex lending him particularly active aid in his resistance of autocratic rule. As the King's (or rather Buckingham's) demands for money grew more frequent and pressing, the breach between Charles and Northumberland widened. At first promises and cajoleries were essayed to win over the obstinate peer. These failing, Buckingham went so far as to employ threats, broadly hinting that a refusal on the Earl's part to support and contribute to the Royal Loan of 1627 would seriously injure the prospects of the House of Percy. One of the favourite's letters to Northumberland in regard to the loan runs as follows: "*It is common bruit of the Town that your Lordship is resolved to refuse the Loan to the King now on foot. I beg your Lordship to think well of it, before*

¹ Northumberland to Viscount Dorchester; *State Papers*.

*you refuse. The matter is not great, and is generally assented to by the rest of your Rank. To refuse will not advantage your Lordship in the Opinion of others, and will frustrate my endeavour to settle your Lordship and your children in the King's Favour."*¹ Had the Earl allowed himself to be converted, like Strafford, from sympathy with the Commons to unqualified allegiance to the King, a dukedom and the gift of large tracts of land taken from the Catholic Irish were to have been bestowed upon him. But he scorned alike bribes and menaces; and, together with the other "*refractory Lords*," sternly refused to "*come in*,"² or, in other words, to countenance the loan in any way. We learn this from a letter to the future Earl of Strafford, who was still opposed, like Northumberland, to arbitrary measures, and who is exhorted in the same context to "*come into the Vineyard at the last hour*," lest Buckingham compass his ruin.³ Wentworth was enticed "*into the Vineyard*" to his own eventual destruction; Northumberland remained defiantly aloof. It is impossible to say how far he was influenced in taking this position by an honest desire for the public welfare; and how far by distrust of the Stuart race (a distrust which he did not attempt to hide) and contempt for the Cecils, Cavendishes, Russells, Villierses, and others who had risen to rank since the Reformation, or even later. But, whether driven into the arms of the Democracy by the vulgarising of his own order, or actuated by sentiments such as those afterwards upheld by his son, and his grandson Algernon Sidney, it is certain at least that the Earl was thoroughly consistent in his opposition to the rash policy of Buckingham and the King. Indeed, but for the assassination of the Duke in 1628, Northumberland and Arundel would probably have been sent back to the Tower.

The Earl had survived most of his enemies, but there was one relentless foe from whose attacks he could not

¹ Buckingham to Northumberland, Feb. 1, 1627; *State Papers*.

² Lord Haughton to Sir Thomas Wentworth, May 19, 1627; *Strafford Letters*, vol. i.

³ *Ibid.*

escape. Old age, and its attendant infirmities, daily weighed more and more heavily upon him, and forced him, against his will, to abandon London and the Parliament, and retire to the comparative solitude of his Sussex home. Even at Petworth, his peace was disturbed by at least one more family trouble, of sufficient consequence to cause him grave distress. This was the marriage of his elder son to Lady Ann Cecil, granddaughter of the man to whom, more than all others, Northumberland owed his betrayal and sufferings—Robert, first Earl of Salisbury. On January 12, 1628, the Rev. Joseph Mead had written to Sir Martin Stuteville:—*"My Lord Percy is bent upon marrying with my Lord Salisbury's Daughter. £11,000 is her portion; but my Lord of Northumberland is averse, because her grandfather was his greatest enemy."*¹ It is not surprising, upon the whole, that the old Earl should bitterly oppose this alliance of his honest race with that of the treacherous and unscrupulous Cecil. He remonstrated hotly with his son, and roundly declared that *"the blood of Percy would not mix with that of Cecil if you poured them into a dish!"*² With Algernon Percy, however, as with his sisters Dorothy and Lucy, love outweighed filial devotion. In spite of the Earl's opposition the marriage took place in 1629; but superstitious gossip long afterwards maintained that the failure of Ann Cecil to bear her lord a son and heir was due to a curse laid by the angry "Wizard" upon what he considered an unhallowed union.³

Apart from this, Northumberland's life at Petworth during the brief remainder of his days seems to have been contented and happy. In fine weather he amused himself with gardening and the planting of trees; at other times chemical researches and a well-filled library furnished him with agreeable occupation. For purposes of study his

¹ Birch's *Charles I.*

² *Ibid.*

³ Northumberland was said to have prophesied that *"the Earldom should never pass to a Percy with Cecil blood in his veins"*; as indeed proved to be the case. The failure of the line of his son-in-law, Hay, was similarly ascribed to the Earl having withheld his blessing from Lady Lucy Percy at her marriage.

sight had almost entirely failed, and he now employed four readers and secretaries, instead of two. Among these was his cousin, Edward Percy, nephew of the conspirator Thomas Percy, and great-grandson of Josceline Percy, brother of the fifth Earl.¹ De Fonblanque is mistaken in his assertion that Thomas Harriot accompanied his patron to Petworth, and helped him to fit up a laboratory there.² The celebrated scientist died in 1621, a month before Northumberland obtained his liberty.³ Hues, Torperley, and Thomas Allen, however, may well have visited Petworth. It is interesting to note that Torperley and Allen both died in the same year as their friend and fellow-scientist, the Earl.

Part of the summer of 1632 Northumberland spent at beautiful Penshurst with his elder daughter Dorothy, now Countess of Leicester. In spite of the superior beauty and brilliancy of Lady Carlisle, Dorothy had always been his favourite; and it was certainly in this leafy corner of Kent that he saw her at her best, the happy mother of a lusty brood—all destined to make their mark in the world some day. Lucy of Carlisle preferred the busy life of the Court, as her mother and grandmother had done before her; and there she had already begun to turn her wit to account in a thousand subtle plots, and to bend her splendid eyes admiringly upon "Black Tom" Wentworth. But gentler Dorothy was quite content with a peaceful life at Penshurst among her children, where her chosen friends were kindly, simple-hearted neighbours such as that Dame Selby of the Moat-House, whose merits are so quaintly recorded in an epitaph at Ightham hard by.⁴

¹ See Genealogy, Tables II. and III. Edward Percy died at Petworth, and was buried there in 1630.

² *Annals of the House of Percy.*

³ *Dict. of Nat. Biography.*

⁴ This epitaph to Dame Dorothy Selby of Ightham Moat-House records that she was :—

*"In heart a Lydia, in tongue a Hanna,
 In zeale a Ruthe, in wediock a Susanna.
 Prudently simple, prudently wary,
 To the world a Martha, and to Heav'n a Mary.
 She put on } in the yere of her { age, 69;
 Immortality } Redemption, 1641."*

Northumberland found his grandchildren urchins of great promise and exceptional good looks. With the Sidney blood, at least, that of Percy had mingled happily. Dorothy, first of the merry tribe, was a blue-eyed maiden of fifteen, without a thought as yet of the hearts that she was destined to break, or of the fame that was to be hers as the *Sacharissa* of love-sick Master Waller. Lord Lisle, in his fourteenth year, showed little of that stern seriousness which, in after years, distinguished the soldier of the Commonwealth. And upon the fair face of Algernon Sidney, godson as well as grandson of the Wizard Earl, there rested no shadow prophetic of the future. To these children Northumberland, with his long white beard and reputation for supernatural wisdom, must have been a creature of awe, and even of dread; but the grave scientist could unbend at times, and it makes a pleasant picture to think of him, throned upon some "tanned haycock" in the Penshurst meadows, with his daughter by his side, and the young Sidneys listening eagerly to the tales which he told them. To one dark phase of his life we may be sure he did not turn—the Tower and its gloomy memories would have been out of place with such an audience. But upon many another subject he was free to talk—the foreign lands and peoples which he had visited, the great wits and doughty captains of his early manhood, the glories of olden days, the wonders of sky and sea! English history was one of the topics which he most delighted to discuss; nor could he altogether refrain from tingeing his narrative with some of that bitterness which he felt towards ungrateful monarchs and their ministers. Who can tell how deeply the minds of Algernon Sidney and his brother were influenced by what they learnt during those long summer days at Penshurst?

With the approach of autumn, the Earl took leave of his grandchildren and went back to his solitary life in Petworth. There he was suddenly overtaken by disease (probably small-pox), and died in his seventy-first year, on November 5, 1632—"Gunpowder Plot Day." His hasty

burial beside the remains of Countess Dorothy in Petworth Chapel, is all that is left to be recorded concerning the chequered career of Henry Percy, the "Wizard Earl" of Northumberland.

Only three of the Earl's six brothers outlived him; and one of these (George) died later in the same year. The eldest survivor, William Percy, was a singular character, who, although endowed with considerable talents, had drifted (through an unhappy love-affair, it is said) into obscurity. He entered Gloucester Hall,¹ Oxford, in 1588, at the age of fifteen, and soon established for himself a reputation as "a young man of learning and genius." This early promise, however, was not fulfilled. We find Percy repeatedly in prison—first in the Tower, upon a charge of homicide, and subsequently in the Fleet for debt. His open acknowledgment of Roman Catholic opinions put an end to all hopes of his preferment at Court, and he retired to Oxford, where many holding similar views had found an asylum. Here he still lived in 1638, upon the pittance of a younger son, holding no communication of any sort with his relatives, and "*drinking nothing but ale.*"² He died ten years later "*an aged Bachelor, in Penny Farthing Street, Oxford, after he had lived a melancholy and retired life many years; and was buried in the Cathedral of Christchurch, near to the grave of Sir Henry Gage, the 28th of May 1648.*"³ Percy was an associate of Barnabie Barnes, the author of "Parthenopie and Parthenope," who dedicated his "Offices" to "*The Right Noble and Vertuous Gentleman M. William Percy, Esquier, his dearest friend.*" Percy's own literary works, like those of Barnes, are forgotten to-day; but he enjoyed considerable reputation as a dramatist and writer of sonnets. His "Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia," composed in 1594, were reproduced in book form some years ago.⁴ They are supposed

William,
Richard, and
George
Percy.

¹ *Wood's Oxford MSS.*, Ashmole Museum, 8466, fol. 4.

² *Strafford Letters*, ii. 166.

³ *Wood's MSS.*, Ashmole Museum.

⁴ In 1877; edited by the Rev. A. B. Grosart, D.D.

to have been addressed to the unknown lady whose cruelty wrecked the poet's happiness. Two plays written by him during the period of his retirement were printed in 1824 "from a MS. in the Library of Joseph Haslewood esquire."¹ They display not a little talent, and a great deal of the coarseness of language common to the age. The first is entitled "The Cuck Queanes and Cuckolds Errants; or the Bearinge down the Inne: A Comœdye, by W. P.;" the second, "The færy Pastorall; or the Forrest of Elues (introducing Oberon, King of the Færys, Chloris his Queene, Orion Prince of Eluida, Sir David a Schoolemaster of the Færy Children, and others)."

Sir Richard Percy, another brother who survived the ninth Earl, also ended his life in obscurity, after a youth of great promise. His military services in Ireland have been already referred to. When the Earl was unjustly condemned by the Star Chamber, Richard Percy became disgusted with life in England, and went abroad. Like his brother William, he was a Roman Catholic; and he died in 1647 in a religious house on the Continent. There is no record of his having married, or left issue.

George Percy, after the Earl the ablest of the seven brothers, was born in 1580. He saw some service in the Low Countries (probably in the company of Northumberland and Raleigh), and in December 1606 sailed for Virginia with the first American expedition of James I.'s reign. On May 23, 1609, his name occurs in the list of incorporators of the second company of Virginian adventurers. His first intention was to have settled down in the Dominion, for he obtained considerable grants of lands (subsequently alienated) and married Anne Floyd, daughter of one of the colonists at Jameston. In August 1609 Gabriel Aucher describes him as one of "the respected gentlemen of Virginia." In the quarrel between the adventurers and Captain John Smith, Percy sided with the former; and after Smith's recall in 1609 to answer the charges made against him, Percy was made Deputy-

¹ Published by William Nicol, London.

Governor. On June 12, 1610, he became a member of the Council under the new Governor, Delawarr, and in 1611 again Deputy-Governor. Acting in this capacity he exchanged gifts with "the great sachem Powhatan," father of Pocahontas. His expenditure at this time proved larger than his income, for on August 17, 1611, he wrote a letter to his eldest brother, the Earl, apologising for having overdrawn his allowance to the extent of £432. 1s. 6d. It was necessary, he explained, to "keep a good table" at Jamestown, where foods and wines were very costly. Northumberland paid the debt, but apparently advised his brother to return to England; and on April 22, 1612, Percy resigned his office, disposed of whatever goods he owned, and left Virginia. In London he acted for some time as agent for the Virginian adventurers opposed to John Smith. When Smith published his "General History," Percy wrote in reply "A True Relation of the Proceedings and Occurrences of Moment which happened in Virginia from . . . 1609 until . . . 1612." In this he accuses Smith of being a braggart and a slanderer, and sets forth at length the various grievances of the settlers. A second work followed of more permanent value, entitled "A Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony of Virginia." This tract was republished by both Hakluyt and Purchas. Percy's restless nature forbade that he should remain long inactive, and about 1625 he entered the service of the United Provinces as a volunteer. He had a finger shot off in one engagement (1627), and for some time commanded a company with distinction. His death occurred in 1632, a few months after that of Northumberland; and he does not appear to have left any children by his wife, Ann Floyd.¹

¹ This, however, is not absolutely certain. Ann Floyd remained behind in America after her husband's return to England.

IV

THE tenth Earl of Northumberland was born on October 13, 1602, after two of his brothers had died in infancy.

He was baptized at Essex House on the following day; his godmother being Queen Elizabeth (the Marchioness of Northampton acting as proxy), and his godfathers the Lord Treasurer and the Lord Admiral (Nottingham) of England.¹ It was an era of fanciful names, and Northumberland went back to the very fountain-head of his race to find one for the latest born Percy. "*The child*," wrote Chamberlain, "*is called 'Algernon,' after one of his first ancestors, that of the House of Brabant. It is thought somewhat a strange and disused name;*² *but it is better to have a strange name than none, as your Dolphin*³ *hath not that I can heere of.*"⁴ The worthy gossip is, of course, mistaken in thinking that the name "Algernon" had its origin in the House of Brabant and Louvain. It was, as will be remembered, the appellation of that William de Percy who first settled in England, generations before the line merged in that of Josceline of Brabant.

Almost as soon as he had passed what his father termed "*The Long-Cote Age*," Young Percy was taken from his mother's care and installed in the Tower, where the Earl was already a prisoner. Northumberland has been blamed for thus making his son a prisoner like himself; but he himself always maintained that the results amply justified him in the course which he took. That the training which the lad obtained under his father's direction was far superior

¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, Oct. 15, 1602; *State Papers*.

² Certainly a strange name to apply to an infant, if its meaning ("The Whiskered") be considered!

³ The Dauphin.

⁴ Chamberlain to Carleton, Oct. 15; *State Papers*.

to what might have fallen to his share in the outer world there can be little doubt ; but, on the other hand, these years spent within prison walls, apart from companions of his own age, left upon his character an impression of seriousness, and even of gloom, which nothing could efface. In studying the history of Algernon Percy, one is constantly reminded of the fact that his all too brief boyhood was spent amid these stern surroundings. His only friends were men far advanced in years—grave, learned men who had been tried in the fires of suffering ; many of whom belonged, like Nicholas Hill and Thomas Allen, to the forbidden religion ; and few of whom had any reason to look with love or respect upon the Stuart King and his shifty advisers. He saw his father, one of the greatest peers in the realm, condemned to imprisonment and threatened with the loss of his estates at the will of an irresponsible sovereign, and upon charges deliberately trumped up by a treacherous rival. To know that this father, the head of a race which had rendered extraordinary services to the State, and deserving in his own person of the King's warmest gratitude, was being persecuted thus wantonly ; to see innocent men like Walter Raleigh flung into a dungeon, robbed, and finally butchered, while pimping Somerset and his murderous paramours went scot free ; to look day after day upon the wrongs and miseries encompassed by the callous walls of the Tower—these were experiences which rendered Percy old before his time, and tempered his inherited pride with a reserve which, in after life, made him seem cold and haughty to those who did not know him well. As might have been expected, the things which he heard and witnessed were little calculated to strengthen his allegiance to the reigning dynasty and its methods of government. We are told that Northumberland was fond of hearing his son read Plutarch ; and of commenting sagely upon each Life as it was passed in review, comparing the great men of their own time with those of antiquity. One wonders whether Lord Percy endeavoured to establish any parallels between the luminaries

of the Court and the subjects of Plutarch's pen. The comparison could hardly have been flattering to the former.

When the Brick Tower was rented from Lord Carew as a residence for the heir of Northumberland, apartments therein were assigned to Robert Hues (one of the famous "Three Magi" of the Earl). Hues acted as Algernon's principal tutor. In addition, capable instructors in dancing, fencing, writing, and many other accomplishments were engaged and liberally paid for their services.¹ The art of riding Percy acquired in the fields and lanes of Essex, whither he went twice or three times a week under the care of his father's "gentleman of the horse," John Hippeley. Northumberland distrusted Court life and its influence upon the mind of his son, but he was determined not to retard in any way the latter's worldly welfare. When the future King Charles was created Prince of Wales in 1616, a number of boys of his own age were invested with the order of knighthood, and of these the second in point of rank was Algernon Percy. "*I have not the list of the twenty-four Knights of the Bath that were made at the time,*" writes John Chamberlain; "*but it may suffice that they were all of noble Houses, and the Lords Maltravers,² Percy and Wriothesley³ were the ringleaders.*"⁴ Percy's fees on this occasion amounted to £340, 14s. 2d.⁵ Next year he bade good-bye to his quarters in the Tower, and betook himself to Cambridge University. On this head the "Dictionary of National Biography" is betrayed into an error. Following De Fonblanque unquestioningly, it asserts that "Percy was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, as family papers prove, and not at Christ Church, Oxford, as stated by Collins and Doyle." As a matter of fact Percy was educated at *both* universities, in so far as a very brief stay at either seat of learning may be regarded

¹ *Syon House Rolls*.

² Ancestor of the Duke of Norfolk.

³ Afterwards Earl of Southampton, father-in-law of Josceline, 11th Earl of Northumberland.

⁴ Chamberlain to Carleton, Nov. 9, 1616: *State Papers*.

⁵ *Syon House Rolls*.

as education. He cannot have resided at Cambridge more than six months; for on July 15, 1617, he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, as "*Percy, Algernoun, Cantabrigiensis*," and signed the register among the *Nobiles*.¹ While residing in the Tower, in 1615, he had been entered as a student of the Middle Temple.² The expenses incurred by his term at Cambridge were by no means light. For "*Admittance and Incorporation*" he was charged £6, 5s. od. ("*no more*") ; for "*Six Months Commons*, £28, 2s. 4d" ; for "*Extraordinary Diet*, £50, 16s. 4d" ; and for "*Furniture of Lodgings*, £20, os. od."³ His servants (who were kept upon board wages of seven shillings a week each) numbered six. By way of personal allowance he had £50 a year ; and for his clothing, £200 for the term. Altogether his Cambridge sojourn must have cost about £500 (or, in modern money £2500) *per annum* ; and the Oxford expenditure was on a similar scale. By way of contrast, it is interesting to note the very different treatment accorded at this time to his younger brother, Henry Percy. This poor lad was brought up at the school of one John Willis in Isleworth ; and his annual expenses, including diet, never exceeded £25. He had no pocket money, and no extras whatever—except the entry, "5d. *for gages and scourges*," be looked upon as such.⁴ When Henry Percy was allowed to travel in France two years later, it was "*in a modest manner*," and at "*small cost*."⁵

After leaving Oxford, Algernon Percy went abroad, bringing with him a well-filled purse, and the "Instructions" regarding foreign travel which his father had prepared for his benefit. Lads of sixteen, plentifully supplied with money, and sent out to view the world with no other restraint than that offered by an obsequious tutor (whose hopes of future preferment in the Church depended upon the favour of his pupil),⁶ are rarely disposed to pay great

¹ *Register, University of Oxford*, pp. fol. 18a.

² *Register of the Middle Temple*.

³ *Syon House Rolls*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Lord Percy's tutor was the Rev. William Dowse.

attention to the grave and carefully written didactics of their parents. Percy was in no sense of what is now called a "priggish" temperament; but he possessed a fund of sound common sense, even at that early age, which caused him to realise the value of his father's elaborate suggestions and to follow them faithfully, especially in regard to the acquiring of languages and the study of maritime affairs. Northumberland appears to have had a prescience that his heir would, at some future day, be intimately connected with the naval affairs of his country. Even in the Tower the Earl had models of shipping (both of war and commerce, fully rigged and armed) constructed for Percy's use;¹ and in the "Instructions" he devoted much space to the study of foreign vessels, their tonnage, draught, and general usefulness. If Percy acquired high reputation as a linguist, he also developed into one of the shrewdest and most practical naval authorities of his time, and the knowledge which he obtained in this respect during his travels afterwards stood him in good stead when he came to be Lord Admiral of England. His stay abroad (varied by brief visits to London, as on the occasion of his sire's release from the Tower) lasted for about six years. In 1624, at the age of twenty-two, he first entered public life as knight of the shire for Sussex. The King and Buckingham laboured diligently to attach him to the Court party, but without success. In spite of a personal liking for the Prince of Wales, and a deep respect for the memory of Queen Ann of Denmark, Percy could not be induced to accept any favours from the sovereign who had treated his father so unjustly. Already, indeed, the opinion was forming in his mind that the mode of government practised by the Tudors, and disastrously imitated by their Stuart successors, could not and should not be maintained. James, after an attempt to make a match between him and Mademoiselle de St Luc² (which only resulted in the young man's hurried and ungracious departure to the

¹ *Syon House Rolls*.

² Chamberlain to Carleton, Feb. 2, 1623; *State Papers*.

Hague), abandoned further efforts at conciliation. Percy had no wish to marry as yet, certainly not at the royal dictation. He did not even take his father into his confidence as regarded his matrimonial intentions; and when he chose a wife eventually, it was (as we have seen) one by no means acceptable to the Earl. In 1625 he represented Chichester in Parliament, and in 1626 the county of Northumberland. After the death of James, old animosities were permitted to subside. The Earl took his seat in the House of Lords, and Percy accepted from Charles I. the post of Master of the Horse. Buckingham and his adherents congratulated themselves somewhat prematurely upon having broken down the opposition of the great north-county family and once more attached it to the Crown. On March 28, 1627, a writ was issued by virtue of which Lord Percy was summoned to Parliament in his father's barony of Percy of Alnwick. Of course, as Nichols points out in his admirable "*Synopsis of the Peerage*," this summons was due to an error, and could not have been issued with propriety save under authority of a special Act. Queen Mary had not reversed the attainder of Sir Thomas Percy, but had simply created the Barony of Percy and Earldom of Northumberland anew, on April 30-31, 1557, in favour of Henry, commonly called "seventh Earl." It was due to carelessness or ignorance on the part of the Heralds' College that Algernon Percy was now summoned in, and conceded the precedence of the original barony of February 6, 1299. The effect of this was, according to Nichols, to create a new barony by writ—the same which is now represented by the Duke of Athole.¹ Even had the attainder of Sir Thomas Percy been removed, the natural heirs of the ancient barony (between whom and the succession, however, *yet another attainder* intervened) would have been the descendants of Thomas, seventh Earl (beheaded in 1572), through his daughters. At the time of Lord Percy's summons to

¹ Nichols; *Synopsis of the Peerage*. A like mistake was made in 1722, when Algernon Seymour, son of Elizabeth Percy, Duchess of Somerset, was summoned to Parliament in the barony of 1299.

Parliament, the senior co-heir of the Barony of Percy of Alnwick was Joseph Woodroffe of Woolley in Yorkshire.¹

No sooner did Algernon Percy take his seat in the Upper House, than, so far from falling in with Buckingham's views, he joined the band of "*refractory lords*," headed by his father, his brother-in-law Leicester, and the Earls of Arundel, Bristol, and Middlesex. Buckingham ventured to remonstrate with this unexpected opponent, and possibly animadverted upon his holding a Court office, while thwarting the King in his demands upon the public purse. In order to place his conduct beyond cavil, Percy forthwith resigned the Mastership of the Horse, and showed himself more "*refractory*" than ever. His chosen associates were Wentworth, Edward Hyde, and Sir Kenelm Digby, all of whom were at this time enthusiastic upholders of the privileges of the Commons, although, with less consistency than Percy, they afterwards altered their attitude, and (in the case of Hyde particularly) upbraided their former ally with ingratitude to the King.

Percy and his bride spent their honeymoon in a protracted tour through the northern estates of their family. They found all their ancient castles and manor-houses, with the single exception of Wressill, in a lamentable condition. Bamburgh, Topcliffe, and Leckonfield were little more than so many piles of ruined masonry, and deserted Alnwick was fast falling into decay. The bitter reflection can scarcely have failed to occur to the mind of Lady Percy, that these evidences of neglect and devastation were mainly the work of her own family, the Cecils; nor could the old Earl refrain from informing Leicester that he regarded it as one of time's revenges that Ann Cecil should thus be made a sufferer by the ruin which her grandsire and her great-grand-sire had wrought. For over fifty years a Percy had not been permitted to inhabit the mansions of his fathers north of Trent, nor had the northern tenantry welcomed an Earl of Northumberland to his hereditary domains in all that time.

¹ See *ante*, under the seventh Earl.

A better era was now about to dawn, however. Bamburgh, Topcliffe, and Leckonfield were past repairing; but orders were issued for the rehabilitation of Alnwick and Wressill.

After Buckingham's assassination, and the death of the ninth Earl of Northumberland, Algernon Percy was induced to return to Court; but his opinions in favour of constitutional government remained unaltered. His brother Sir Henry Percy had recently returned to England, and, possessing a handsome person together with insinuating manners, had made himself so agreeable to the Queen that he was given a small place at Court.¹ Henrietta Maria and the "French party" believed that, through the persuasions of this vivacious but rather shallow younger brother, they could win over the new Earl. Charles was persuaded to overlook the latter's views, and to bestow upon him sundry honours and dignities. In 1633 he was summoned to accompany the King to Scotland, and in 1634 nominated to the Privy Council. During the Scottish expedition, a rather unpleasant incident occurred. Peter Apsley, a hare-brained ruffler and hanger-on of the Court, son of Sir Allan Apsley, formerly Lieutenant of the Tower, and notorious for the many quarrels in which he had been involved, challenged Northumberland to a duel on account of some fancied slight. Only two years before Apsley had been the challenger in another affair, and owed his escape from punishment (the laws against the duello being very severe) to Northumberland's personal intercession.² It does not appear whether or not an encounter took place on this occasion between the Earl and "the irascible Peter" (as Wentworth styles him); but news of the matter reached Charles, who at once ordered Apsley's arrest on the charge of having challenged an official in active attendance upon the sovereign. A Star Chamber trial followed, in 1634. Apsley was ordered to be imprisoned in the Tower at the royal pleasure, and to pay the (to him) impossible fine of £5000.³

¹ Master of the Horse to the Prince of Wales—something of a sinecure, since the future Charles II. was an infant.

² *State Papers, Domestic*. Apsley's father had been a friend of the ninth Earl while in the Tower.

³ *State Papers*.

Lord Chief Justice Heath pleaded to have the fine reduced to £1000, on the ground that the prisoner was hardly responsible for his actions; but Apsley had become so notorious as a *bravo*, that a salutary lesson was deemed necessary. He was eventually pardoned, after a year's confinement, and his fine "suspended upon good conduct." Northumberland's investiture as a Knight of the Garter took place on May 16, 1635, and was an event of great splendour—the last occasion, indeed, upon which knights rode in procession to receive the honour. A Garter had been vacant for two years, and the Earl's friends had expected that it would be conferred upon him; but his pride delayed the bestowal. Charles was desirous that Northumberland should unbend to the extent of asking (indirectly at least) for the coveted favour; but nature had not made Algernon Percy a courtier, and he remained obstinately silent, even when his wife and brother urged him to move in the matter. At length the Queen, in pursuance of her policy of conciliation, prevailed upon Charles to take the initiative.¹ She was careful, at the same time, to personally convey to Northumberland that he owed his blue ribbon to her influence alone. The informal manner in which the Earl was notified of his new dignity is thus described by his chaplain, George Garrard (afterwards master of the Charterhouse, and a lifelong friend of the Percy family):

"On the twelfth day my Lord of Northumberland being in the Queen's Withdrawing Chamber, the King and Queen coming in, she looked about until she espied him, then beck'ned him unto her, and told him that she had moved the King for one of the vacant Garter Places now empty for him, and the King had granted her request. So she took him up to the King, who confirmed it; and thereupon kissed His Majesty's Hand. And I verily believe he is beholden to no Courtier of them all for this noble Favour, but the King and Queen: They can judge best of Men's Worth, for neither in the Kingdom, nor out of the Kingdom, do I know any that better deserves this Honour. He is a Man composed of so many

¹ Lord Conway to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*, vol. i.

*Virtues, that I admire him, which I do not ordinarily bestow but upon those that deserve it."*¹

A broadside ballad in black-letter, preserved in the British Museum, commemorates the gorgeous progress of the new Knight of the Garter to Windsor. Chaplain Garrard (who mounted his own pad-nag for the occasion) writes as follows: "*My Lord of Northumberland was installed the 13th of this month at Windsor. Never Subject of this Kingdom rode better attended from his House than he did, nor performed the Business more nobly or more sumptuously. The King, Queen, and Prince stood at my Lord Wimbledon's² in the Strand; thirteen Earls and a Marquis rode with him, besides almost all the young Nobility and many Barons. I must not forget my Lord Cottington,³ who was very rich in Jewels and his Feather but the Spanish Way, and a competent number of the Gentry, near an hundred Horse in all, besides his Servants, who were fifty, costly and bravely clothed, beyond any that hath been seen before. Four Pages, all Earls' Sons; two of my Lord Chamberlain, one of my Lord Salisbury, and the fourth my Lord of Leicester's; twelve footmen, two brave Coaches, with four in Livery to drive them. My Lord Clanrickard, his son,⁴ and my Lord Dunluce⁵ were of our Company (for I rode too), but not one of the Scottish Nation; which was the more observed because many of our English did the last honour unto my Lord Morton. The Garter is grown a dear Honour; few Subjects will be able to follow this Pattern."*⁶ A dear honour to Northumberland it certainly proved. According to the accounts kept in Alnwick Castle, his expenditure during

¹ Rev. G. Garrard to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*, vol. i. 427.

² Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon (1572-1638), brother of Salisbury.

³ Francis Cottington, Lord Cottington, then Master of the Court of Wards, afterwards one of Charles's chief ministers.

⁴ This was the Earl of Clanricarde who rebelled four years later, and was one of the leaders of the Confederate Catholics in Ireland.

⁵ Randal MacDonnell, Lord Dunluce, son of the first Earl of Antrim, chief of the Irish MacDonnells. His mother was a daughter of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. We shall hear of him again as quarrelling with Sir Henry Percy.

⁶ Garrard to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*, May 19, 1635.

the pageant and subsequent investiture at Windsor (including heralds' fees) amounted to "£1493, 11s. 3d."¹

The Earl's practical knowledge of maritime affairs was no secret at Court; and on March 23, 1636, he was appointed to command the new fleet raised by dint of "ship-money." His full title was "*Admiral, Custos Maris, Captain-General and Governor of the Fleet and Sea Forces.*"² The higher dignity of Lord Admiral, Charles as yet held in reserve for his infant son, James, Duke of York. Northumberland chose as his Vice-Admiral Sir John Pennington, and as Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Mervyn—the latter of whom Garrard describes as a *protégé* and pensioner of the Earl.³

If the new Admiral had hoped to sweep the seas with his fleet (and the Court apparently looked for some such exploit), he was doomed to grievous disappointment. One cruise sufficed to convince him that, with such ships and such sailors, England could never hope for supremacy upon the deep. The much-heralded navy was indeed in a deplorable state; and, to make matters worse, Northumberland found himself still further hampered by corrupt officials, and a viciously incompetent Board of Admiralty. To the latter was due a measure which, at the very outset, deprived some of the most trustworthy captains of their commands, *i.e.* the needless enforcement of the oath of supremacy, which even in the bigoted days of Elizabeth and James had not been demanded from ships' officers. Northumberland, although personally as well disposed towards the Catholics as his father had been, had no choice but to comply with the instructions which he received from the King, through Secretary Windebank. To quote from Gardiner's "History of England"⁴: "The fleet which was to maintain these exorbitant pretensions had been entrusted to a new Admiral. This time it was sent out under the command of the young Earl of Nor-

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*; Memorandum Book No. 10.

² *Federa*, xix. 761.

³ Garrard to Wentworth, May 15, 1636; *Strafford Letters*.

⁴ Vol. viii.

thumberland. . . . A courteous and high-spirited young nobleman, who took care to keep himself aloof from the factions of the Court, he was on the best terms with everybody. He was himself in friendly intercourse with Wentworth. His sister, Lady Carlisle . . . was still the reigning beauty at Whitehall, and his brother, Henry Percy, had gained a strong influence over the Queen by his light and amusing conversation. . . . Lindsey's Vice-Admiral, Sir William Monson, had been a Catholic. Northumberland was now ordered not to admit any officer who refused to take the oath of supremacy as well as the oath of allegiance." Among the captains who asked for "time to consider," and who subsequently resigned their commissions rather than take the obnoxious oath were Sir John Digby, Sir Kenelm Digby,¹ and Mr. Penruddocke. On May 20 Northumberland hoisted his flag on the *Triumph*, and sailed for the Downs. He found that his ships were heavy and lumbering craft, ill-equipped in every respect, and by no means worthy to cope with the comparatively swift and well-armed French or Dutch men-of-war. A large French fleet was reported at Rochelle; but Northumberland failed to fall in with it. Off Portland he sighted eight warships of the enemy, and at once gave chase. The English vessels crowded on all sail, but were ignominiously left behind in the race. A rumour that the French had stolen out of Rochelle and proceeded up the Channel brought the Earl back to the Downs with all the speed his lagging armaments could afford. The rumour proved to be false, however, and when the French did actually leave their anchorage it was to proceed in a southerly direction.² Northumberland wished to pursue, but Charles—at the advice of Windebank and the Admiralty—forbade this course; and the Earl, greatly against his will, was ordered to use his fleet for the purpose of exacting tribute from

¹ Kenelm Digby had married Venetia Stanley, a near relative of Northumberland (she was granddaughter of the seventh Earl, and a co-heir of the ancient Barony of Percy)

² Northumberland to the Admiralty, May 23 to June 22, 1636; *State Papers*.

a few Dutch fishing-smacks. The Dutch fishermen had long been accustomed to frequent English waters in the herring season, and it was now determined to make each of these foreign boats take out a licence for the privilege. Chafing inwardly at the inglorious mission to which he was condemned, Northumberland nevertheless obeyed, and succeeded in forcing some 200 owners of Dutch herring-smacks to pay toll to Great Britain. The government of the United Provinces protested warmly against what was held to be a most high-handed and unjustifiable proceeding, but the English Admiral carried out his instructions to the letter, and threatened with confiscation all boats that were not duly licensed. Thus terminated the first season of his command. That he had not accomplished more was due, not to his own lack of energy or skill, but rather to the uncertain policy of Charles, and the wretched state of his ships.¹

But it must not be supposed that the Earl had done nothing but crawl in the wake of French ships and drag shillings from the pockets of peaceful fisher-folk. Denied the honours of active service against the enemy, he turned his attention to the Augean task of reforming the navy itself, and, in December 1636, presented the King with a full statement of the many crying abuses which existed in fleet and Admiralty. Justice has never been done to this first of English naval reformers for the good which he accomplished, or for the still greater good which he fearlessly attempted. Long afterwards Pepys, when Secretary to the Admiralty, found and profited by many of Northumberland's straightforward and practical reports. The navy, according to the Earl's memorial to Charles, consisted at that time of 60 ships, of from 7 to 22 feet draught of water. Some of these were rotten; all were faultily built, and easily out-sailed by French vessels of fair speed. The sails supplied were of the very worst material; and the cordage (in

Abuses, and
suggested
reforms in
the Navy.

¹ Gardiner, viii. p. 158.

the expressive language of Northumberland—language of which we sometimes hear an echo to-day) was "*worthless stuff, which none but His Majesty's officers will buy*"! The crews were "*the very refuse of the whole Kingdom*"; and (it speaks volumes for the Earl's superiority to his contemporary commanders, that he should complain of such a lack) there was no decent provision for the sick and wounded.¹ Contracts for ships' stores brought commissions and perquisites to the Admiralty Board and its underlings; hence the victualling of the fleet was of the vilest description. "*Food,*" wrote Northumberland, "*is bad and scant—the beer not fit to drink, and the dry salted meat is naught.*"

With regard to the character of the officers serving under him, the Earl had little to say that was complimentary; and on this head we find him making a suggestion in the way of reform startlingly in advance of his time. Briefly he proposed that skilled navigators who had risen from the forecabin might be eligible for commissions as officers. Many of his captains and lieutenants, he declared, were mere creatures of the Court, who owed their appointments to influential or wealthy relatives. These he held in undisguised contempt, as useless in peace and dangerous only to their country in time of war. The rest of his subordinates were well enough, but might be the better for a slight admixture of experienced sailors of humble birth. "*With these Gentlemen Captains,*" he writes, "*it will be requisite to mingle some of the better sort of Seamen, who have been taught on severe Occasions, and have by their Merit raised both their Fortunes and Reputations.*"

This daring report raised a storm of indignation among the Lords and Commissioners of the Admiralty. Everything was done at Court to retard or prevent the proposed reforms, and Charles learnt from the friends of the threatened department that his new Admiral was a rash man who would ruin the navy with his new-fangled

¹ In spite of Northumberland's plea for proper "sick-bays" on board war-ships, the bad old system continued with little alteration down to the days of Smollett.

theories. In the end, the King referred the Earl's report to the very persons most interested in suppressing it—the Naval Commissioners, "*with whom*," wrote Northumberland in February, "*it hath lain dead ever since, and is never likely to revive again.*"¹ Meanwhile the corrupt contractors, who had been temporarily frightened by threats of exposure and dismissal, took heart from the delay and returned to their old evil practices, sneering at the "*great Admiral whose bark was worse than his bite.*" Thoroughly disgusted at the manner in which his representations and complaints had been shelved, the Earl resolved to leave the navy to its fate. "*The slackness in punishing the offenders*," he told Wentworth (with whom, at this time, he kept up a constant correspondence), "*hath made them so insolent, that now they justify those facts which hitherto they have tacitly admitted. This proceeding hath brought me to a resolution not to humble myself any more with endeavouring a reformation, unless I am commanded to it.*"² Wentworth sympathised warmly with his friend, and replied: "*Let the Commissioners think as they please; you have done right, and, whether it take or not, in my judgment it concerneth His Majesty more than yourself.*"³ To these words of encouragement he added help of a more substantial nature. Laud was inspired by him to raise anew the question of reform in the navy; and just when the officials thought themselves again secure from interference, they found their peace once more disturbed from a wholly unexpected quarter—the bench of bishops. Northumberland had been upon the point of resigning, in the belief that a command in the navy was scarcely "*fit for any person of honour.*"⁴ Now, however, the King and Laud joined in pressing him to continue at the head of the fleet for another year. Laud, still prompted by Wentworth, strongly advised the King, as a preliminary step in the direction of reform, either to call the Earl to the Commission, or else to make

¹ *Strafford Letters*, vol. ii. p. 46.

² Northumberland to Wentworth, Feb. 7, 1637; *Strafford Letters*.

³ Wentworth to Northumberland, Feb. 18, 1637; *Ibid.*

⁴ Northumberland to Wentworth, Feb. 20, 1637; *Ibid.*

him Lord High Admiral and place the affairs of the navy absolutely under his control. As we have already stated, this proud position was being reserved for the little Duke of York; but Laud suggested that Northumberland might be allowed to occupy it until the Duke arrived at suitable years.¹ At the personal request of Charles, the Earl again took command in April 1637. He found that much the same conditions prevailed as in the previous year; and to his intense annoyance the campaign against the Dutch fishermen was resumed. These men had in the meantime received assurances of support from their government, however, and were no longer disposed to submit tamely. One or two smacks which were overhauled offered a smart resistance, and the Admiral ordered them to be seized. The United Provinces at once sent a letter of protest to Charles; whereupon the latter retreated from the position which he had taken up, and, fearful of war with the Dutch, ordered Northumberland not to pursue such fishers as endeavoured to escape the payment of toll, but to collect what moneys he could from the less determined opponents of the herring licence.² Such instructions made the Earl's position doubly humiliating, but it also afforded him an excuse for permitting the Dutch fishing-smacks to go their ways undisturbed. He implored the King to allow him to enter French waters, but the desired permission was not granted, and he remained for the most part stationary in the Downs. This inaction was galling in the extreme. "*To ride in this Place (the Downs) a whole Summer together,*" he wrote to Wentworth, "*without hope of action; to see daily disorders in the fleet, and not to have the means to remedy them; and to be in an employment where a man can neither do service to the state, gain honour to himself, nor do courtesies for his friends, is a condition that I think nobody will be ambitious of.*"³

¹ Wentworth to Northumberland, Feb. 21; *Strafford Letters*.

² Holograph Letter from the King; dated July 28, 1637, from Windsor; *Alnwick MSS.*

³ *Strafford Letters*, vol. ii. p. 84.

Meanwhile Charles had been persuaded by Laud and Wentworth that the appointment of Northumberland as Lord High Admiral was desirable, not only for the good of the navy, but also as a possible means of turning the Earl from his views against the principle of Divine Right, and converting him into an adherent of the Court. More than one personage of importance had angled for this dignity since it lapsed with the death of Buckingham, and there was disappointment in various quarters when the King gave it, somewhat unexpectedly, to one who was recommended as much by merit as by influence. The Earl of Holland in particular felt that he had been ungratefully overlooked by the King; and an amusing description is given in the Strafford Letters of the consternation wrought by the news in his lordship's "petticoat council" of great Court Dames.¹ These ladies had worked zealously to obtain the Lord Admiralty for Holland, and they now reviled the more fortunate Northumberland in no measured terms. The new patent was issued (in the interest of the Duke of York) as "*during the King's pleasure*," and not, as in Buckingham's case, for life.² Consternation spread through the ranks of the corrupt naval officials when they learned that their avowed foe had been placed in practical control of the service; and, in accordance with the nature of these gentry, scores of the worst sinners at once offered to do penance (and at the same time save their places) by giving evidence against their fellows. On March 31, the day after Northumberland's appointment, Thomas Smith wrote to Sir John Pennington, the Vice-Admiral: "*Informers begin to bestir themselves, and a great deal of knavery will be discovered.*"³

The new and responsible duties to which he was thus called were at first insufficient to distract Northumberland's mind from the effects of a great loss which he had

¹ This feminine cabal consisted mainly of Lady Devonshire, Lady Essex, and Lady Rich.—*Strafford Letters*.

² Collins, vol. ii. p. 247. The date of the patent was March 30, 1638.

³ *State Papers*.

recently sustained—the untimely death of his wife. Ann Cecil, Countess of Northumberland, died on December 6,

1637, of small-pox, following upon a miscarriage. Her decease afflicted the Earl deeply; although from the outward calmness of bearing in which he had schooled himself, many fancied that his nature was too stoical for grief. But men of this sort, who through pride or shyness conceal their sorrows from the world, often suffer far more poignantly than those who find relief in unchecked emotion. In Northumberland's case, the bereavement preyed so keenly upon his spirits that it finally brought about a serious illness. In the words of George Garrard, the Earl took his wife's death "*most heavily: passion hath the least outward power of him of any man I know, yet in this it hath got on him a great mastery.*"¹

Lady Northumberland was not yet thirty when she died, without leaving a male heir. Five daughters, however, survived her. After the birth of the fourth of these, the gossiping Garrard wrote on October 30, 1635, to Wentworth: "*He (Northumberland) is but a bungler of getting boys; but I hope they will come.*"² A fifth daughter was born in 1636. The body of the young Countess was embalmed, and carried in a barge from London to Syon, and from Syon to Petworth in a mourning coach. Edmund Waller wrote an elegy upon her death; but his lines are spoilt by an indelicate hint to Northumberland that grief should not prevent him from marrying again, since an heir was wanting in the direct line of Percy. As for the Earl, he brooded in secret over the loss, rejecting the well-meant consolations of Cottington, Garrard, and other friends. Such was the strain upon his mind that, about a fortnight after his elevation to the Lord Admiralsip, he broke down completely; and hundreds of naval offenders breathed more freely when they learned that their enemy was dangerously ill of fever. He was not pronounced out of

¹ Garrard to Wentworth, Dec. 16, 1637; *Strafford Letters*.

² *Strafford Letters*.

danger until May 10; and the attack left behind it an intermittent ailment which afflicted the Earl to the end of his life. "*My Lord of Northumberland hath had a long sickness*" (so Wentworth was informed by Garrard, who, in spite of his new-won dignity as master of the Charterhouse, found time to visit the patient daily); "*it began with a Headache, a violent one. . . . Mayerne and Baskerville his physicians let him blood four times, and physick enough they have given him, which hath brought him very low. . . . These last two nights he rested very well, so that the lookers-on as well as physicians begin to conceive good hopes of his recovery, which I beseech God to grant. . . . His brother, Percy, hath been also desperately sick of a burning fever, stark mad with it, but mends somewhat, though but slowly. I thought last week we should have lost both the brothers together.*"¹ Had Northumberland and Sir Henry Percy died at this time, the title and estates must have passed to their uncle, the strange old-bachelor recluse who lived in Pennyfarthing Street, Oxford, "drinking nothing but beer," and thinking sadly of his "fairest Coelia."² As matters stood, Henry Percy was heir presumptive to his brother, with an excellent chance of eventually succeeding to the earldom. After the death of the Countess, he found his consequence at Court greatly enhanced. The Queen came in person to inquire how his illness went; and soon after his recovery he was made Captain-General of Jersey. The sudden change in his circumstances rendered him arrogant and quarrelsome. He first engaged in a dispute with his brother-in-law, Carlisle, who had shown him many kindnesses in the past, but whom he now deemed it safe to flout. "*He had rather be damned,*" he declared, "*than receive a courtesy from my Lord of Carlisle.*"³ Carlisle, good-humoured always, took the words at their true value; and contented himself with ceasing to invite Percy to his house. A subsequent dispute between Sir Henry and

¹ Garrard to Wentworth, May 10, 1638; *Strafford Letters*.

² William Percy survived until 1648.

³ Lord Conway to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*, i. 363.

Lord Dunluce did not end so agreeably for the former. Dunluce, who was an Irishman, and a grandson of the fiery Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone,¹ had none of Hay's *sang-froid*. Thinking himself insulted by Percy, he publicly assailed the latter, and is even said to have struck him. No encounter followed; but the grave penalties inflicted for duelling may have prevented Sir Henry from challenging Dunluce, as his more impetuous father, or his grandfather, Essex, would certainly have done under like circumstances. The affair caused a great deal of malicious gossip at Court, and comment on Percy's behaviour was by no means favourable, even among the *coterie* of gallants which surrounded the Queen. Writing to Wentworth, Lord Conway mentions the occurrence, and at the same time sheds some light on Sir Henry's character:—

*"Percy is a diligent Courtier; his chief Patron being the Duke of Lennox, his Addresses are most on the Queen's Side; but I cannot say that he gains much in Love anywhere. He had a quarrel with my Lord Dunluce this last Summer, out of which he came not so handsomely as did become Harry Hotspur. I believe he will not make any great profit by the Court, because he begins the 'PATER NOSTER' with 'Give us this Day our daily Bread.' His wits did long 'COMBINARE' upon projects in Ireland, and I believe they are not all yet at an End; there being little hope for him here, now that he hath missed going Ambassador into France."*²

As soon as Northumberland was restored to health, he resumed the interrupted duties of Lord Admiral. Many sweeping reforms were introduced into the navy at his instance, in spite of the dogged opposition of Secretary

¹ Lord Dunluce (afterwards second Earl and first Marquis of Antrim) was son of the first Earl of Antrim by a daughter of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. His paternal grandmother was also an O'Neill, daughter of that Con who had disgraced himself in Irish eyes by accepting the title of Earl. The Antrim MacDonnells, a branch of the Hebridean clan, had been settled in Ireland since before 1211. The Dunluce who attacked Sir H. Percy is now represented (in the female line) by the Earl of Antrim.

² Conway to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*, i. 363.

Windebank and the Commissioners ; nor is it too much to say that his zeal and foresight made possible the great successes of the English fleet under Blake, during the days of the Commonwealth. He was a vigorous champion of the common sailor, and continually proposed schemes for the betterment of his wretched lot. Good food and fair treatment, he maintained, would do more to make the navy efficient than any other means ; and the Government saved nothing by paying exorbitant prices for rotten ships and fraudulent supplies. To the credit of Northumberland's head and heart must be set down the first instance of provision made by the English Admiralty for crippled sailors, and for the widows of men slain in battle or otherwise lost. In his Report of September 8, 1638, he describes a fund started at his suggestion "*for the relief of maimed Mariners ; and for poor Women who have their Husbands killed, or else lost in merchandising Voyages.*"¹ After a time he succeeded in inducing the Admiralty to adopt this fund, which no doubt formed the nucleus of our present pension system in the navy.

Religious discontent in Scotland having assumed threatening proportions, the King chose a committee from the Privy Council to examine into his northern subjects' grievances. Northumberland was one of the eight councillors selected, and his voice, from the first, was for cautious measures. He knew the wretched state of the navy, and rightly guessed that the army was in little better condition. He was also aware of the extreme poverty of the Exchequer, and its inability to furnish the "sinews of war." For these reasons he advised Charles to concede the principal Scottish demands rather than provoke a struggle fraught with peril to the Crown. "*God send us a good end of this troublesome Business,*" he wrote to Wentworth (still his friend, although no longer sharing his views), "*for, to my apprehension, no foreign*

¹ *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic).*

*Enemies could threaten so much danger to this Kingdom as doth now this beggarly Nation."*¹ His protests were overruled at the time, but years afterwards the King remembered them with self-reproach.

Northumberland grew more and more dissatisfied with the policy of the Government, and the shiftless manner in which public affairs were conducted. "*At the Council of War,*" he told Wentworth, "*we meet often, but dispatch little Business; and yet are we come almost to the Bottom of our Business, for there is no Money left in the Exchequer.*"² The extreme religious views of Laud were, in the Earl's opinion, an additional source of danger to the country; and he favoured an alliance with Richelieu and France, in place of the Spanish *entente* supported by Cottington, Hamilton, and others.³ Although the King would not listen to his advice, he recognised his value in other directions. On March 22, 1639, when Charles was preparing to take command of the northern army, he appointed the Earl general-in-chief of all forces south of Trent, and a member of the Council of Regency,⁴ at the same time placing the Queen under his special protection.⁵ These new duties called for his continual presence at Court; and the management of the fleet was, for the time being, left in Vice-Admiral Pennington's hands. Secretary Windebank took advantage of this fact to interfere in a province with which he had no concern. Pennington was commanded by this civilian official of the Admiralty not to interfere in the sea-struggle between Spain and Holland, *even when fighting took place in English waters*. In obedience to these orders he remained idly at anchor while Van Tromp chased Admiral Oquendo's fleet from Land's End "*into Dover Roads, and there captured, sunk,*

¹ *Strafford Letters*, vol. ii. 186, 266.

² Northumberland to Wentworth, Jan. 2, 1639; *Strafford Letters*.

³ See his outspoken letters to the Earl of Leicester (*Sidney Papers*) at this time.

⁴ *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic)*.

⁵ Geo. Garrard to Lord Conway; *State Papers*.

or ran ashore over fifty warships." Northumberland was justly enraged when the news of this shameful episode reached him. Windebank he described as "*the basest and falsest Creature that lives*";¹ and he told Pennington that in thus permitting a friendly foreign fleet to be destroyed in an English harbour, he had connived at an insult to his King and Country. The unpopularity of the Spaniards in England saved both Windebank and Pennington from the punishment which they merited for this shameful affair. Had the Dutch Admiral been the victim, matters might not have gone so well with the officious secretary and his dupe.

War with the insurgent Scots now seemed inevitable; and the King's demands for money grew daily more importunate. Every nobleman attached to the Court was expected to contribute sums in accordance with his rank and resources, and Charles looked for an unusually large "loan" from the Lord High Admiral. But Northumberland disappointed these hopes, and loosened his purse-strings in what the Queen's party considered a most grudging manner. There is little doubt that his chief reasons for giving so sparingly to the King were, firstly, a desire that Parliament should be summoned and more constitutional methods of money-raising adopted; and secondly, chagrin at the manner in which his advice against hostilities had been received. To his brother-in-law, however, he offers a third explanation: "*Your Lordship was not mistaken in the Captain's² Figures where he writes to you that I lend the King but £5000. The reason why I do so is, that I believe the King would not expect more from me (whos House hath in these latter Ages receaved little or no Advantage from the Crowne) the like Assistance than he may do from those Persons that have raised Fortunes by his Favour, or hold beneficiall Places under him.*"³ Some of the more advanced partisans of the Court accused the Earl of a natural nig-

¹ Northumberland to Leicester; *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. 655.

² "The Captain" was Northumberland's nephew, Lord Lisle.

³ Northumberland to Leicester, Jan. 9, 1640; *Sidney Papers*, ii. 629.

gardliness; but if he showed himself a miser upon this occasion, it was for the first and last time in his life.

Wentworth had not yet abandoned all hope of attaching Northumberland to the King's side in the coming strife between Crown and People. At his request,¹ Charles now created the Earl "*Captain General and Governor of the Army*"—a post which had been intended for Wentworth himself, and the enjoyment of which placed Northumberland in the extraordinarily responsible position of being at once chief of the land and sea forces. As he had already done in the navy, the new Captain-General now attempted to do in the army. He saw that war must come, and within a little while. There was still some hope that the royal troops might be rendered efficient by judicious reorganisation, and a careful weeding out of undesirable commanders. To this work the Earl at once set himself. Among the first to suffer by his zeal was the Earl of Holland, an unlucky nobleman whom Northumberland seemed destined to cross (he had already forestalled him in the Lord Admiralsip). Holland held rank as a general of horse, but was now superseded in favour of Lord Conway, a tried soldier.² It was the desire of the Captain-General that the old system of purchasing commissions and promotion, or of obtaining them by favouritism, should be abolished. "*No money*," he informed Leicester, on February 13, 1640, "*will here be given for places as was usual heretofore.*" Numbers of gallant English soldiers, tired of inaction and corrupt influences at home, were serving as volunteers in the Low Countries. To these Northumberland proffered commissions, in place of officers dismissed or degraded for incompetency. His own nephews, Lord Lisle and Algernon Sidney, young as they were, had already earned high reputations in Holland; and he now asked them to accept posts of trust under him. Algernon Sidney declined the invitation, as his republican theories debarred him from service in the royal army: Lisle returned to England, and was made captain of his uncle's body-guard.

¹ Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion*, ii. 80a.

² *Ibid.*

The Earl did not spare himself in his uphill fight against military conservatism and incompetency. The great mass of carefully prepared MSS. which still survives over his name bears witness to the pains which he took. He compiled exhaustive instructions for officers in every branch of the army; detailed schemes of pay, and commissariat; rules governing the distribution of ordnance and ammunition; and a rather severe code of martial law—all in his own handwriting. Lord Conway, whom he had sent to command in the North, seconded him ably; but in the end the efforts which he made to reform both army and navy proved too much for him and he sank under the strain.

Meanwhile the Scots had continued to press obstinately for a favourable answer to their conditions; and on April 13, 1640, the "Short Parliament" met. Northumberland wrote to Conway that the Commons seemed in "*almost as great a heat as* . . . *in the late Duke of Buckingham's time*" (when he, himself, had been a member of the body); and that the House of Lords was "*apt to take fire at the least sparkle.*"¹ He had welcomed this appeal to constitutional forms of government; but the extreme vigour with which the Lower House demanded the redress of its grievances, drew from him an expression of regret. "*Had they been well advised,*" he observed, "*I am persuaded they might in time have gained their desires.*"² After a fortnight spent in fruitless wrangling, a dissolution was commanded by the King. Northumberland opposed this arbitrary measure in the Council, supported only by Lord Holland. After the Dissolution, Charles called a Cabinet Council consisting of Archbishop Laud, the Bishop of London, the Earls of Northumberland and Strafford,³ and Secretaries Vane and Windebank. It was in this

¹ Northumberland to Conway, April 17, 1640; *State Papers*.

² Northumberland to Leicester; *Sidney Papers*, ii. 623.

³ Wentworth was now Earl of Strafford.

council that Strafford was afterwards accused of having threatened to bring over an Irish army to quell the turbulent Commons; and that he advocated a vigorous policy in regard to discontent at home, and an immediate attack upon the rebellious Scots. Against both of these proposals Northumberland spoke. "How," he asked, "could they 'make an offensive war,' if they had no better means at their disposal than those which Strafford had just recited? They were in a difficulty 'whether to do nothing, and to let them alone, or to go on with a vigorous war.'" ¹ He voted against the latter alternative. Strafford replied with an eloquent speech, strongly in favour of war; and Laud and Cottington holding like opinions, the Council was committed to an invasion of Scotland. As it happened, the Scots did not wait to be attacked; but crossed the Border, with Leslie at their head, before the English had time to concentrate their forces at Newcastle. Well-nigh despairing of the future, Northumberland wrote as follows to Conway: "*It grieves my Soul to be involved in these Counsails, and the Sense I have of the Miseries that are likely to ensue is held by some a Disaffection in me; but I regard little what these Persons say or think.*" ² Eleven days later he wrote again: "*The Nature of most Men is not willingly to acknowledge an Error until they needs must, which is one of our Conditions here at this Time. We have engaged the King in an expensive Occasion, without any certain way to maintain it. All those that are proposed to ourselves have hitherto failed, and though our Designs of raising this great Army are likely to fail, yet are we loathe to publish that which cannot any longer be concealed. In plain terms I have little Hopes to see you in the North this Year, which I confess I am extremely sorry for, conceiving it will be dishonourable to the King and infamous for us that have the honour to be his Ministers, when it shall be known that we are obliged to give over this Danger.*" ³

¹ Speech reconstructed by Gardiner from Secretary Vane's notes.

² Northumberland to Conway, May 7, 1640; *State Papers*.

³ Same to same, May 18; *State Papers*.

Early in June, Lord Loudoun (who had been sent as Commissioner to Charles by the Scots, and straightway placed in the Tower at Laud's instigation) was suddenly set at liberty by the vacillating Charles. Northumberland again addressed his second in command: "*The Enlargement of Lord Loudoun causes a belief that we shall come to Terms with the Scots. But seriously I do not know that any such thing is intended; yet to you I must confess that our Wants and Disorders are so great, I cannot devise how we should go on with our Designs for this Year. Most of the Ways we have relied upon for the Supplies of Money have hitherto failed us, and for aught I know we are likely to become the most despised nation in Europe. To the Regiments now raising we have been able, for want of Money, to advance but fourteen Days' Pay; the rest must meet them upon their march towards Selby; and for both Horse and Foot already in the North we can for the present send them but Seven Day's Pay. We are gallant Men, for this does not at all discourage us, and we yet make full account of conquering Scotland, before many weeks pass.*"¹

In August, when on the point of starting for the Scottish Border, the Earl was attacked by a serious illness, which incapacitated him, for the time being, from active service. Some of the more prejudiced writers on the royalist side have broadly hinted that this seizure was little more than a subterfuge, intended to cover secret sympathy with the Scots and a disinclination to lead his troops against them. Clarendon, for instance, asserts that Northumberland failed to take command "by reason of his indisposition, or some other reason."² Isaac D'Israeli³ comments sarcastically upon the fact that the Lieutenant-General fell sick at the very time when duty called him to a campaign for which he had little relish. But a careful examination of the existing records on the subject

The Scots
Invasion;
and the trial
of Strafford.

¹ Northumberland to Conway, June 12; *State Papers*.

² *Hist. of the Rebellion.*

³ *Life of Charles I.*

tends to show that, however strongly the Earl had spoken against a Scottish war, he did not, when that war became inevitable, attempt to shirk the responsibilities of his command. So far, indeed, was this from being the case, that the very sickness which overtook him at what D'Israeli regards as a suspicious juncture, seems to have originated in the strenuous efforts which he made to place the army on a serviceable footing. "Northumberland," says Gardiner, "had always been hopeless of any good result, and his health had now broken down under the strain. (It has been suspected that the illness was a feint to escape commanding; but the letters among the State Papers leave no doubt of its reality. See especially Garrard to Conway, Oct. 6; *S. P., Domestic.*")¹ The letter quoted is an exhaustive account of the Earl's sufferings, written by his friend the master of the Charterhouse. There are other contemporary papers, which are still more opposed to the Royalist theory (not advanced until long afterwards) of the Earl's having descended to this crafty and eminently uncharacteristic trick. Not more than three days before he fell ill, we find him making rapid preparations for his departure, and sending instructions to his second in command with regard to the quarters which were to be prepared for him at Newcastle. "*Tell me what House you think fittest for me to lodge in at Newcastle,*" he writes to Conway; "*and give notice to the Master of it that I intend to be his Guest: but it must be a furnished House, for I shall only bring such Stuff as is useful in the Field.*"² These are hardly the words of one who was scheming to avoid service in the campaign. On August 15 Strafford first heard of the Earl's malady. "*My Lord General,*" he informed Conway, "*has had three fits of a tertian Ague and been let blood, but I trust a few days will set him right.*"³ The hope was not fulfilled.

¹ *History of England*, vol. viii.

² Northumberland to Conway, Aug. 11, 1640; *State Papers*.

³ Strafford to Conway, Aug. 15; *Ibid.*

Two days later, Strafford wrote again: "*On my return from Windsor I called at Sion, but my Lord General was then in a Sweat after a very long and violent fit.*"¹ The intermittent attacks of the disease continued; and it was hastily decided that Strafford should assume chief command against the Scots. "*My Lord General will not possibly be able to go this Journey*" (thus the new leader to Conway, by letter of August 18), "*having had already divers great fits of an Ague, which is no small unhappiness to his Majesty's affairs. In this sudden Accident, His Majesty has appointed me Lieutenant-General, and howbeit utterly unprovided of all things, yet I suppose to be with you in all possible haste.*"² The result of this ill-advised campaign justified but too fully Northumberland's forebodings. The Scottish army having invaded England under Leslie, were well received by the country-folk of the North. On August 28 they met and defeated the English under Conway at Newburn-on-Tyne. The evacuation of Newcastle, and the surrender of that city to the victorious Scots, followed. Northumberland, still confined to his bed by illness, wrote in terms of foreboding to Leicester, prophesying serious danger both to Strafford and the King from the popular clamour which had arisen against them. Spies were everywhere, and the Earl found it necessary to conduct much of his correspondence with his brother-in-law in cipher. Fanciful names were applied to the principal men of the various factions, the Earl of Bedford, for example, being known as "Higgledy-Piggledy."³

The Long Parliament met on November 3, 1640; and the animus of the Commons towards Strafford at once became apparent. "*I cannot forbear to mention the hastie and violent Proceedings the other day,*" wrote Northumberland, "*against my Lord Liffenant, and I fear he will be prosecuted with as much Eagreness as euer Man was: for a greater or*

¹ Strafford to Conway, Aug. 17; *State Papers*.

² Same to same, Aug. 18; *Ibid.*

³ See *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii.

more universal hatred was never contracted by any person than he hath drawn upon himselfe.

*"The King is in such a straight that I do not know how he will possiblief auoide (without indangering the whole Kingdom) the giving Way to the Remoue of diuers Persons, as well as other things that will be demanded by the Parliament."*¹

Strafford was in retirement and comparative safety at his Yorkshire seat, when on April 23, 1641, the weak King was cozened into summoning him to Court, promising that he "*should not suffer in his person, honour, or fortune.*" Alas for the royal word, and the ability of Charles to maintain it! Within a few weeks Strafford was a prisoner, impeached by Parliament, and arraigned before the House of Peers. Northumberland, as a member of the Council of Eight, was one of the witnesses summoned to prove that arbitrary and unconstitutional measures had been advocated by the accused. He denied that Strafford had threatened or advised the bringing over of the dreaded Irish army to crush the Parliament; but admitted, on the other hand, that the King had been counselled by the majority in the Council (of which Strafford was the leader) to proclaim an absolute monarchy, after the Commons had refused to grant supplies.² Earnest efforts were made by Charles to induce the Earl either to falsify his evidence, or else remain silent. The latter he could not, the former he would not do, although the viceroyalty of Ireland for his brother-in-law, Leicester, was promised him by way of a bribe. The King openly expressed himself as highly displeased with this conduct, and the offer of the Irish viceroyalty was at once withdrawn.

Although the division list for that memorable occasion has been lost, it is practically certain that Northumberland was one of the eleven peers who voted for Strafford's

¹ *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii.

² The Earl's evidence was to the effect that Strafford had declared Charles "*absolved from all rules of government, and . . . acquitted before God and man for whatever measures he thought fit to adopt for the preservation of his crown and people.*"—Gardiner; *History of England*.

acquittal.¹ Again and again we find reproaches hurled at him by Henry Martyn and others of the violent party in the Commons for having "*interfered with Justice,*" and *attempted to stand between the enemies of the State and their due.*" He is known to have laboured, in conjunction with his sister, Lady Carlisle, to save Strafford's life, by urging the King to exercise his prerogative of pardon. But the impassioned pleadings of beautiful Lucy Percy, and the Earl's earnest solicitations, were alike of no avail. On May 10 Charles sacrificed his minister and friend, by signing the warrant for his execution; and two days later Thomas Wentworth paid for the perversion of those great talents (of which, in the words of Lord Digby, "God had given him the use and the Devil the application") by a death upon the scaffold.

There was one person, at least, whom the desertion of Strafford by his perjured King changed from an ardent supporter of royal prerogative into one of the Crown's bitterest enemies. This was Northumberland's sister, Lucy, Countess of Carlisle. We have seen the younger and fairer daughter of the "Wizard Earl" married under somewhat romantic circumstances to her lover, Lord Hay, and subsequently taking her place as the beauty *par excellence* of the Court. It is not so much with Hay's name, however, as with that of Wentworth that the memory of Lucy Percy is linked by history. She is best known as "Strafford's mistress"—not his "mistress," it is believed, in the sense that her aunt was the mistress of Sir Philip Sidney and Mountjoy, or her grandmother of Leicester; but rather his warm personal friend, admirer, and *confidante*. None of Strafford's opponents, not even the most virulent, went so far as to assert that the bond between him and Lady Carlisle was aught but platonic. They first met before Wentworth went to Ireland in 1633, and the rapidity with which their

Lucy Percy,
Lady
Carlisle—
"Strafford's
dearest
friend."

¹ According to Clarendon, only forty-six votes were recorded in all upon the Bill of Attainder.

acquaintance ripened into regard may be judged from the frequent allusions made by the Lord-Deputy to his new friend, in the letters which he wrote during that corrupt and tyrannical viceroyalty. His cousin and creature, Wandesford (to whom he coolly presented the Leinster coalfield, which he had stolen from its owners), frequently rallies him upon his admiration for "*my faire lady of Carlisle, your most sweet Egeria*."¹

Lucy Percy was now over thirty years of age, yet her beauty was but at the meridian of its splendour. The Court gallants one and all were at her feet; the Court poets sang her praises. But to reign merely as a "queen of hearts" fell far short of her ambition. She had inherited much of the intriguing spirit of her grandfather, the eighth Earl of Northumberland (with perhaps not a few of that hapless nobleman's other characteristics²), and it was her aim to make for herself a position of great influence in public affairs. To some extent she was successful. Isaac D'Israeli calls her "*the first of stateswomen*";³ and she was certainly the first English lady to found and conduct what we now call a *salon*. Lodge, in his "National Portraits," depicts her as a beautiful, brilliant worldling, "at once admired, disliked, and feared; little understood by any, and perhaps least of all by herself. . . . She turned her attention to politics, despised the society of her own sex, studied systems of government, intrigued in matters of State, actually obtained considerable influence, and exercised it with adroitness."⁴ She helped to fight the battles of her husband and her father against Buckingham; and it was probably while supporting old Northumberland in his advocacy of Parliament and its privileges that she came to know Strafford—then Sir Thomas Wentworth, knight

¹ See the *Life of Sir Christopher Wandesford*, by Comber.

² His restless ambition, for instance, and (if we are to believe Clarendon and other Royalist writers) some of the duplicity which distinguished his conduct during the Northern Rising.

³ *Life of Charles I.*

⁴ *National Portraits*, vol. vii.

of the shire and staunch champion of constitutional government. Lady Carlisle was attacked by small-pox in 1628; but the dread disease left no mark upon her fair features, and when she paid her first visit to Whitehall after the illness had passed, and removed her face-mask at the Queen's request, the gossips were amazed to find that her very pallor lent a new charm to her countenance.¹ Her husband, Lord Carlisle, died in March 1636, leaving £80,000 of debts, a sum of money to his wife, and "not a house or acre of land." The widow had her own fortune, however, left her by her father, and had also inherited some of the Perrott property from her mother, so that she was able to remain at Court without any diminution of dignity. She had no children by Carlisle, who was succeeded in his titles by the only son² of his first wife, Honora Denny. The reappearance of the widow at Court, after a few months of mourning, served as signal for the wits and poets to shower their songs of welcome at her feet. Sombre weeds were found to enhance still further the clear complexion and graceful figure of the Countess, and a galaxy of verses, as ingenious as artificial, survive to show that Lucy Percy looked comely even in the garments of sorrow. Herrick wrote in lyric rapture "*Upon a black Twist, rounding the Arm of the Countess of Carlisle;*" the Laureate Davenant was even more complimentary, although far less skilful, in celebrating the young widow's "trailing robes." "Incomparable Master Edmund Waller" addressed a long poem to the Countess, whom he then regarded as the chief inspirer of his muse—her niece, the future Saccharissa," being still a child at Penshurst. Waller thus extravagantly apostrophises Lady Carlisle:—

"When from black clouds no part of sky is clear,
But just so much as lets the sun appear,
Heav'n then would seem thy image to reflect,
Those sable vestments and that bright aspect.

¹ Garrard to Wentworth; *Strafford Letters*.

² James Hay, second Earl of Carlisle.

A spark of virtue by the deepest shade
 Of sad adversity is fairer made ;
 Nor less advantage doth thy beauty get,
 A Venus rising from a sea of jet !
 Such was th' appearance of new-forméd light
 While yet it struggled with eternal night.
 Then mourn no more, lest thou admit increase
 Of glory, by thy noble lord's decease !"

After Carlisle's death, the relations between his relict and Wentworth became more confidential than ever. The Lord-Deputy left his Irish charge for several weeks in the winter of 1636 ; and Lady Carlisle postponed a visit to her sister at Penshurst in order to be near him. Whereupon the gentle "country mouse" wrote somewhat complainingly to her husband, Leicester : "*It is a month since I expected my sister's company, but my lord deputy is still thereabouts, and till he be gone back I must not look for her.*"¹ Indeed Lady Leicester looked upon her sister's friendship for Wentworth with distrust (perhaps on the score of propriety), and while she admitted that Lucy had "*more power over him (Wentworth) than any creature living,*"² she doubted whether the alliance would in the end prove beneficial to either. Nor did she at all approve of Lady Carlisle's political intrigues, believing that women were but ill employed in such pursuits. "*Do not confide over much in Lucy*" was her advice to Leicester ; for Lucy's secrets were apt (so it appeared) to be passed on to the male gossip, Lord Holland, and "*from thence . . . all over England.*"³ It must be remembered, however, that the Countess Dorothy wrote from the seclusion of her Kentish home, and took most of her views at second-hand from her son Lisle, and her neighbour Sir Harry Vane the younger.⁴

About this time there occurred between Strafford

¹ *Sidney Papers.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The Vanes resided at Shipborne, some four miles from Penshurst ; and the grounds of their seat, (Fairlawn) are said to be haunted by the ghost of the younger Sir Harry carrying his severed head under his arm.

and his "mistress" certain financial transactions the nature of which cannot be precisely determined. It is evident, however, that Lady Carlisle had advanced money either to the Royalist cause, or to Strafford himself for Royalist purposes. It is highly probable that the money was lent shortly before the Scottish invasion, when the Lieutenant-General was suddenly called upon (through Northumberland's illness) to take command of the Northern army, and found it sorely lacking in arms, ammunition, and commissariat. Strafford, at all events, held himself personally responsible for the repayment of the loan; and after the rout of his troops by Leslie, we find him writing from his retreat of Wodehouse to a confidential friend at Court in terms which show his deep sense of Lucy's loyalty, as well as his fear that she would be the loser by her generosity: "*For the love of Christ take order that all the money due to my Lady Carlisle be paid before Christmas, for a nobler and more intelligent friendship I never met with in all my life.*"¹

Like Strafford himself, Lady Carlisle relied implicitly upon the King's plighted word, and believed that at all hazards Charles would preserve his minister's life. Clarendon relates that she was, "for her eminent and constant affection for the Earl of Strafford, admitted to all the consultations that were for his preservation";² and in Browning's dramatic poem she is rightly represented as taking part in all the secret measures taken by the friends of the doomed Wentworth. The King's abject surrender to Parliament, and the signing of her hero's death-warrant, filled her with feelings of contempt and aversion for a sovereign who could so soon forget his promises. From the morning of Strafford's execution, she that had been "the Muse of the Royalist party" became, as Bishop Warburton tells us, its Erinnyes. Towards the Queen she still treasured some degree of personal affection, for she believed that Henrietta Maria had laboured to save

¹ *Strafford Letters.*

² *History of the Revolution.*

Strafford from the block ; but against Charles her enmity was intense, and she set herself, with all the skill which she possessed, to thwart his plans and strengthen the hands of his foes. Her bitterness against the throne was so open and undisguised that one wonders why she was still permitted to frequent the Queen's apartments, and thus penetrate many important State secrets, which were through her made known to Pym and the Parliament. The charge made by Clarendon, Warburton, and others that she deliberately played the spy upon the King at this period is doubtless well founded. Strafford's betrayal had robbed her of all scruple in this direction ; but if she conveyed information to the enemies of the Crown, she asked no other reward than that of gratified revenge. The dour, cold-blooded Pym was now her bosom friend—some said (as had been said of Strafford) her "lover" ; but this is highly improbable.¹ "She had," says Sir Philip Warwick, "changed her gallant from Strafford to Mr. Pym, and was become such a she-saint, that she frequented their sermons and took notes !" The notes which Lady Carlisle took at the gatherings of her new friends were far more likely of a political than of a religious character. In her early life she had been a professing Catholic, and had attended mass in the Spanish ambassador's chapel for many years, but if she had any religion left at this later time, it was not manifest in anything that she said or did. Clarendon avers that she informed Pym and young Harry Vane of all the "sharp sayings" which Charles and his courtiers exchanged concerning the Commons, and that the leaders of the Parliamentary movement noted down these loose remarks for use in their debates. There is no question, however, that she rendered to the party of the Commonwealth a service far more important than the reporting of mere Court tittle-tattle and cavalier japes. The escape of the "Five Members" was due to a timely warning sent by her hand to Westminster before Charles and his officers could reach the

¹ Pym was now nearly sixty years of age, having been born in 1580.

House. There are several versions of the manner in which she succeeded in divining the King's intentions. Madame de Motteville's account is to the effect that the royal party had already left to arrest the members, when Lady Carlisle discovered what was afoot. The Queen, who was in the secret, but had been cautioned to preserve a strict silence, could not resist the temptation of taking somebody into her confidence. Having waited impatiently until such time as she deemed the culprits must have been secured, she turned to the ladies with her, and exclaimed, "*Rejoice with me, for by this time — and —*" (mentioning two of the members) "*are doubtless in custody!*" Whereupon Lady Carlisle, guessing the purport of this speech, hastily left the room upon some pretence or other, and despatched an urgent note to her friends in the House of Commons, just in time to save them from the Tower. Gardiner dismisses this story as unlikely upon the ground that, if the King had already started from Whitehall, there would have been no time to convey a warning note to the House. He believes that Lady Carlisle's quick wit had discovered the scheme before Charles set out, and that she was thus enabled to give the intended victims ample time to escape by barge. That "Strafford's mistress" was the real marplot is generally admitted, and Clarendon accuses her of having grossly betrayed the Queen's confidence. After Pym's death in 1643, Lady Carlisle sided with the moderate faction in Parliament, the recognised leader of which was her brother, Northumberland.

Another member of the Percy family—the Earl's brother, Sir Henry, whose somewhat inglorious quarrel with Lord Dunluce has been already alluded to—was now to play for a brief space a prominent part in public affairs, as one of the leading spirits in what came to be known as the Army Plot.

After the Scottish invasion and the Treaty of Ripon, grave dissatisfaction sprung up among the officers of the

Northern army, to which Sir Henry Percy had belonged since 1639. Money which should have gone to pay the English forces of the King, was devoted to the Scots instead. The troops were in rags and well-nigh starving, and even among the officers considerable distress prevailed. Percy, with Ashburnham, Wilmot, and Pollard (all members of Parliament), formed themselves into a union, the avowed object of which was the betterment of their condition. Secretly, however, they proposed to attempt the reëstablishment of the King's power by a banding together of all holding commissions in the Northern army. A declaration pledging absolute loyalty to the Crown and detestation of Parliamentary encroachments was drawn up by the four instigators of the movement, with the connivance (it is said) of the Queen. Percy, who was in high favour at Court, was chosen to offer the services of the army to Charles; and with this end in view he reached London on or about March 19, 1641. He found, however, that another Royalist plot, upon far different and more daring lines, had already been hatched by Henry Jermyn and Sir John Suckling. This latter scheme included measures so sweeping as an offer of emancipation to the Catholics, and an immediate appeal to arms. It was proposed to remove Northumberland from the Lord-Generalship, and to place the Earl of Newcastle in his stead, with Colonel George Goring, a ruffler of the Court and a man of no good reputation, as Lieutenant-General. The more moderate project of Percy and the Northern officers found favour in the King's eyes from the first; but, hoping to secure unity among his supporters, he persuaded both parties to meet in consultation, and if possible agree upon some joint plan of action. The meeting took place on March 29, in Percy's lodgings at Whitehall.¹ On behalf of the Northern army, Percy himself, Ashburnham, and several others were present. They had declined to receive Sir John Suckling, who was unpopular among military

¹ These were the lodgings assigned to him in his capacity of Master of the Horse to the Prince of Wales.

men ; but Henry Jermyn came to the conference, bringing with him Colonel Goring. From the very outset it was plain that no satisfactory agreement could be come to between the opposing parties. Goring and Jermyn warmly advocated the claims of Newcastle to the Lord-Generalship ; Goring swearing that no Royalist peer in England was so well fitted for the position. Percy, on the contrary, championed his cousin, Lord Holland ;¹ while yet others of the moderates suggested Essex. The mere mention of Colonel Goring as Lieutenant-General was greeted by the representatives of the army with derision ; and the meeting terminated in the departure of Goring in a tempest of rage, swearing that he would make Percy and his friends pay dearly for the manner in which they had treated him. From Whitehall he went straight to the residence of Lord Newport, a supporter of the Parliament, to whom he betrayed the plot. Newport hastened to lay the matter before Pym, Mandeville, and Bedford, and, on the night of May 5, Percy, Jermyn, and Suckling were summoned before the Lords' Committee, charged with having intrigued against the Government. The accused men were warned by their friends, and attempted to escape. Percy fled to Petworth, and thence to the Sussex coast, whence he attempted to take ship for France. He was recognised, however, and set upon by some yokels, anxious to gain the reward offered for his capture. Drawing his sword, he cut his way through the press, and rode back to London, severely wounded and in a most sorry condition, being covered with blood and mire. At the gates of Northumberland House he was lifted in a fainting condition from his horse, and carried to a place of concealment. As soon as his wound healed he wrote a letter to Parliament, admitting his share in the recent plot. The accounts of how this confession came to be written vary extensively ; but the most plausible one seems to be to the effect that Northumberland, believing his brother's life to be in

¹ Holland was first cousin of Northumberland and Sir H. Percy, being a son of the frail Penelope Devereux by Lord Rich.

danger, and desirous of securing his escape,¹ induced him to make a full statement of what had occurred, and to throw himself upon the mercy of his brother members of the House of Commons. Clarendon, whose bias is apparent, states that the Earl obtained the letter from his brother by means of a trick, and that bad blood was thereby caused between them. The latter statement is wholly unfounded, as, however different their politics may have been, Northumberland and Sir Henry Percy never ceased to entertain for each other the warmest affection, as is testified by their correspondence. The Earl probably acted as he did from purely disinterested motives, and, as he believed, for the best. Clarendon's version is as follows:—

"The truth is that after his Brother being accused of High Treason, and then upon his Hurt in Sussex, coming directly to Northumberland House to shelter himself, the Earl being in great Trouble how to send him away beyond the Seas after his Wound was cured, advised with a confident Friend whose Affection to him he doubted not, and who, innocently enough, brought Mr. Pym into the Council, who overwitted them both by frankly consenting 'that Mr. Percy should escape into France,' which was all the care the Earl had; but then obliged him first to draw such a Letter from him as might by the Party be applied as an evidence of the reality of the Plot after he was escaped. And in this manner the Letter was procured: which made a lasting quarrel between the two Brothers, and made the Earl more at the Disposal of those Persons, whom he had trusted so far, than he had ever been before."²

The sole punishment inflicted upon Sir Henry Percy for his share in the "Army Plot" was expulsion from the House of Commons. This measure was carried into effect on December 9, 1641.³ No attempt was made to

¹ It must be remembered that Sir Henry was now next male heir to the earldom.

² Clarendon; *History of the Rebellion*, i. 474.

³ *Evelyn's Diary*, ed. Wheatley, iv. 75.

arrest Percy; and, shortly before Christmas in the same year, he left Northumberland House and retired to France, where he became an active, if somewhat erratic, agent of the Queen.

According to Clarendon, the Earl of Northumberland was now generally regarded as an enemy to the royal cause, and, like his sister Lady Carlisle, an ally and confidant of Pym. In view of the principles which he had upheld ever since his entrance into public life, and to which he had continued to cleave even after Strafford's conversion to the policy of absolute monarchy, it is difficult to understand why the Court party should have looked for his countenance and support. Yet it would appear that they did so, and his so-called "disaffection" was very keenly felt by them, not only on account of his wealth, intellectual powers, and wide experience, but also because of the effect which the attitude of one so highly esteemed would be certain to produce upon the popular mind. Clarendon freely admits this fact, at the same time that he accuses the Earl of gross ingratitude towards his sovereign. The historian of the Civil War writes as follows: "The sending of that letter of Mr. Piercy's to the House of Commons . . . was the first visible instance of the defection of the Earl of Northumberland from His Majesty's service, which wrought several ill effects in the minds of many; for as the Earl then had the most esteemed and unblemished reputation, in Court and Country, of any person of his rank throughout the Kingdom, so they who knew him well discerned that the greatness of that reputation was but an effect of the singular grace and favour showed him by His Majesty; who immediately upon the death of his father had taken this Earl (being less than thirty years of age) into his immediate and eminent care; . . . and to the very minute of which we speak, prosecuted him with all manner and demonstration of respect and kindness, and (as I heard His Majesty himself say) 'courted him as his mistress, and conversed with him as his friend' without the least

interruption or intermission of all possible favour or kindness.

"And, therefore, many who observed this great Earl purchase this opportunity of disserving the King . . . concluded that he had some notable temptation in Conscience, and that the Court was much worse than it was believed to be."¹

It is surely absurd to argue that the Earl's "most esteemed and unblemished reputation" was wholly due to the King's "singular grace and favour." As regards the two lofty posts which he held, if Northumberland owed his advancement to any one's favour, it was to that of the betrayed Strafford (who had recognised in him the one man of high rank fit to fill those offices) and not to that of Charles. We also know that, finding his heroic efforts to reform the navy thwarted by the King's vacillating policy, the Earl had sought to resign his trust, and that he had only been persuaded to continue in command by the earnest supplications of the Court. In the Council his sound reasoning passed unheeded, and his proposals were voted down; so that it is hard to see how Charles can be said to have "courted him as his mistress, &c." And, apart from all personal considerations, there was the bitter memory of how his father had been treated by James I. to warn Northumberland from that course of blind loyalty to the King which Clarendon and others upbraid him for failing to pursue.

The breach between Charles and the Earl grew rapidly wider. In the second session of the Long Parliament, Northumberland was recognised as the leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. His views, however, were then (as they continued throughout the entire struggle between King and Parliament) distinctly moderate; and he sought, as long as possible, to prevent bloodshed. The extremists among the Parliamentary party, indeed, looked upon him with dislike

Northumberland's
policy of
moderation.

¹ *History of the Rebellion*, i. 473.

and suspicion, because he professed neither puritanism in religion, nor republicanism in matters of State, but pinned his faith upon constitutional monarchy and absolute freedom of creed. His enemy Henry Martyn went so far as to accuse him of "truckling to the Court"—and this at the very time when Charles was meditating his dismissal from the naval command. The Earl's moderation is unjustly set down by D'Israeli as due to natural coldness and lack of sympathy¹; but if he seemed cold to the outside world, in private letters to his friends he displayed a warm and evidently sincere patriotism, as well as a shrewd understanding of the real position of affairs. Perhaps the best idea of his sentiments at this period may be obtained from various letters addressed by him to Sir John Bankes. These earnest epistles, in truth, admirably sum up the case of the People against the King.

"Parliament," he wrote, "*is arrayed against the King because of the Peril of losing that Liberty which freeborn Subjects should enjoy, and which the Laws of the Land do allow; and because those persons who are most powerful with the King do endeavour to bring Parliament to such a Condition that they shall only be made Instruments to execute the Commands of the King.*"² And again—"Let us have but our Laws, Liberties, and Privileges secured unto us, and let him perish that seeks to deprive the King of any part of his just Prerogative, or that Authority which is due to him. If our Fortunes be to fall into Troubles, I am sure (few excepting the King himself) will suffer more than I do; therefore for my own private considerations, as well as for the publick good, no man shall more earnestly endeavour an agreement between the King and his people."³ Northumberland kept his word, and in spite of Royalist scurrility and Parliamentary fanaticism, continued to labour in the cause of peace, as long as peace remained within the bounds of possibility.

¹ *Life of Charles I.*

² *State Papers. Bankes; Story of Corfe Castle.*

³ *Ibid.*

On February 22, 1642, he was nominated by Parliament Lord-Lieutenant of the four counties of Northumberland, Sussex, Pembroke, and Anglesey, apparently without the King's sanction or approval. When Lunsford, a man of notoriously bad character, was given the governorship of the Tower, the Earl led the opposition in the Upper House to this indiscreet appointment, and signed the remonstrance subsequently drawn up by the joint committee. He also supported the Militia Bill, and protested against the refusal of the Lords to pass this measure (which transferred the control of the army from the hands of the King to those of Parliament), averring that "whosoever refused in this particular to join with the House of Commons were, in his opinion, enemies to the Commonwealth."¹ When the Queen's French intrigues were discovered, he was one of the first to denounce them, albeit his brother, Sir Henry Percy, had played a leading part in these efforts to secure armed assistance from overseas. The unsparing vigour with which he assailed Henrietta and her advisers for thus "*seeking to bring in the Sabine enemy*" made him more than ever obnoxious to the "Cavalier" party. Sir Thomas Smith wrote to Admiral Pennington: "*Sir Harry Vane Junior is voted at Court to be put out; and my Lord Northumberland would go the same way if the feminine Gender might have their will.*"² Nor was it long before "the feminine gender" were gratified by the Earl's dismissal from his high command. Parliament having advised him to appoint his cousin, Lord Warwick, Vice-Admiral of the Fleet, he did accordingly, in the full belief that his own commission as Lord Admiral entitled him to make such appointments. Buckingham had certainly exercised this high privilege when he presided over naval affairs; but Buckingham was a royal favourite, and the practical ruler of England. When Warwick's nomination was submitted to the King, the latter made haste to cancel it, and to place one of the Court party over the fleet.

¹ *State Papers.*

² *Ibid.*

Northumberland, however, stood fast; and as the sailors had already accepted Warwick as their commander, Charles found himself in a difficult and humiliating position.¹ The Queen and her friends clamoured loudly for the punishment of the Lord Admiral, but Charles could not for some time make up his mind to this step. Months were allowed to slip by while affairs remained in this unsettled condition; and when at last Northumberland was removed from office it was upon quite another pretext, and one for which little or no justification can be advanced. A ship called the *Providence*, sailing under the Dutch flag, had been secretly chartered by the Queen, and was engaged in bringing cannon and gunpowder to England, for Royalist purposes. This vessel was intercepted by the British fleet, and chased into the Humber, where she succeeded in eluding capture. During the pursuit she had been repeatedly fired upon, but had refused to state what cargo she carried, or whither she was bound. Northumberland knew nothing of the affair until afterwards; but the King professed to hold him directly responsible for what was termed an insult to the Dutch flag (the *Providence* was nevertheless an English ship sailing under false colours), and at once demanded his resignation of the Lord Admiral's commission. The royal letters, dated June 28, 1642, are still preserved at Alnwick Castle. They remind Northumberland that the Admiralship had been conferred "during the King's pleasure" only, and order him instantly to lay down his command.²

Both Houses of Parliament passed resolutions urging Northumberland to defy the royal mandate, and the Commons promised him their full support if he continued to exercise the duties of Lord Admiral. There is no doubt that he was strongly tempted to take them at their word, as he had done in the case of Warwick, for he felt that he was being unjustly dismissed after years of loyal labour in the service of his country. But, on the other hand,

¹ Gardiner, x. 176, 185, 208.

² *Alnwick MSS.*

he realised that to resist the King at such a time would be to precipitate that civil conflict which it was his dearest hope to be able to avert. In the interests of peace, he chose to sacrifice his pride, and leave the work of naval reform to other hands. In reply to the addresses of Parliament he declared "that it would ill become him, who had received that Charge from the King . . . to continue the Possession thereof against his express Pleasure."¹ Whereupon, according to Clarendon,² "the Commons forebore pressing or being angry with his Refusal, which was a Respect they would have given to no other Man, well knowing that it was much easier to mislead than to convert him, and that they should still have the Advantage of his Conscience in other things, though not in this." But not even the Earl's well-meant surrender to the King could stay the inevitable strife. In August the royal standard was unfurled at Nottingham, and Charles declared war upon his discontented subjects.

Before the opposing forces met in actual fight at Edgehill, and while men's minds were still on the rack of doubt, the Earl of Northumberland brought to a happy conclusion a courtship in which he had been for some time engaged. The lady whom he chose for his second wife was a reigning beauty and heiress, Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Theophilus, second Earl of Suffolk, and grandniece of that Francis Howard, Earl of Northampton, who in the days of James I. had shown himself such a bitter foe to the House of Percy. It is a singular fact that Northumberland's first and second consorts should both have belonged to families with which his father, the "Wizard Earl," had been at deadly feud—the families of Cecil and of Howard. No doubt the old "Wizard," were he living in 1642, would have condemned his son's union to the grandniece of

Northumber-
land's second
marriage.

¹ *History of the Rebellion*, iii. 113.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 588.

Northampton as fiercely as he did the earlier alliance with Salisbury's granddaughter.

By an article in the marriage settlements of Northumberland and Lady Elizabeth Howard, the mansion at Charing Cross then known as "Northampton House" was transferred to the bridegroom, upon his payment of £15,000 to his wife's family. The name of this princely residence was then changed to "Northumberland House," and as such it continued to be known down to the year 1870, when it was destroyed to make room for Northumberland Avenue, and the great pile of buildings between that thoroughfare and the river. The house was reconstructed, under the new owner's supervision, by Inigo Jones. Hitherto the principal apartments had looked towards the Strand. The Earl preferred a riverward prospect, and laid out spacious gardens stretching down to what is now the Thames Embankment. The Percy lion carved in stone, which he placed over the front of the house, and which long remained a familiar object to Londoners, was subsequently removed to Syon, where it may still be seen. Perhaps the best known view of old Northumberland House is that by Canaletto. The tenth Earl's gardens were highly commended by Evelyn, who complained, however, that when southerly winds prevailed these tastefully arranged terraces and copses were "wrapped in a horrid cloud of smoke, issuing from a brewery or two, contiguous to that noble palace."¹

De Fonblanque, in his "Annals of the House of Percy," states (without quoting any authority) that the marriage of Elizabeth Howard and Northumberland was the subject of Suckling's "Ballad Upon a Wedding," so often quoted for the "careless natural grace" of its imagery. The scene of the festivities described by the poet was certainly Northumberland House (or Northampton House, as it was then):—

¹ *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 233 (*Fumifugium*).

"At Charing Cross, hard by the Way
Where we (thou know'st) do sell our Hay,
There is a House with Stairs;
And there did I see coming down
Such Folks as are not in our Town,
Vorty at least in Pairs":

and the portrait of the happy bridegroom in some respects resembles that of Northumberland:—

"Among the rest, one pest'lent fine,
—His Beard no bigger tho' than thine—
Walk'd on before the rest;
Our Landlord looks like nothing to him;
The King (God bless him!) 'twould undo him,
Should he go still so drest."

However the Earl was hardly a "youth"¹ at the time of his second nuptials; nor was the Cavalier, Suckling, likely to celebrate in pleasant verse the wedding of one regarded as a leader of the Parliamentary cause. The "Ballad" is more commonly supposed to deal with Lord Broghill's marriage to Lady Margaret Howard,² sister of her who became the wife of Northumberland. The date of the Earl's second marriage was October 1, 1642.

Although the Earl had accepted a place on the Parliamentary Committee of Safety (July 4, 1642), it was only that he might the more vigorously pursue his policy of conciliation. Even the battle of Edgehill and the King's march upon London did not shake his belief that a peaceful settlement might yet be effected. "In the city and in Parliament,"

Northumber-
land leads
'the Parlia-
mentary
Peace Party.

¹ "The Youth was going,
To make an end of all his wooing."

² Lady Margaret Howard, daughter of Theophilus, Earl of Suffolk, and sister of the Countess of Northumberland, married Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill, afterwards first Earl of Orrery, son of the notorious adventurer Boyle, who founded the fortunes of that family in Ireland. Orrery died in 1679, and his widow resided after his decease with her sister, Lady Northumberland, at Syon. She died there in August 1689, and was buried in Isleworth parish church.

says Gardiner, "above all in the House of Lords a Peace Party was quickly formed. Amongst the Peers, its most respectable member was the kindly Earl of Northumberland, always anxious for a quiet life, and always distrustful of enthusiasts."¹ Lords Bedford, Clare, Holland, and Pembroke lent him active support in the Upper House (although some of them favoured peace from motives less praiseworthy than his own); and in the Commons such men as Holles, Selden, Whitelocke, D'Ewes, and Maynard were known to share his opinions. On November 10 he was sent to meet Charles at Colnbrook with proposals for an armistice, but nothing came of these overtures; and during the Parliamentary encampment on Turnham Green both the Earl and his cousin, Holland, appeared in arms.² Syon House suffered severely during the Royalist sack of Brentford; but Northumberland entertained no malice, and after Charles had drawn off in the direction of Oxford, he again proposed a conference, marching in company with Lord Pembroke into Palace Yard, crying "Peace! Peace!"³ Early in January 1643 he moved in the House of Lords that "a Committee be appointed to consider how there might be an accomodation between the King and his People for the Good, Happiness, and Safety of both King and Kingdom."⁴

After much discussion, this was at length agreed to by both Houses, and a Committee, consisting of Northumberland, Holland, Lord Salisbury, Edmund Waller, and nine others, was chosen "to attend His Majesty at Oxford to treat about the Proposals for Peace," and authorised "upon any emergent Occasion to come up to the Parliament to receive further advice."⁵ Bulstrode Whitelocke, who was one of the delegates, has left an account of the negotiations, which were prolonged, with various intermissions, until March. Safe-conducts were granted by the King, and the Committee went to Oxford in great state, each coach drawn

¹ Gardiner, i. 53.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵ *Journals of the House of Lords.*

by six horses. "The Earl of Northumberland carried with him his own Plate and Household stuff, and Accomodation even to Wine and Provisions, which were brought from London to us at Oxford, where we lived in as much Height and Nobleness as the Earl of Northumberland used to do, and that is scarce exceeded by any Subject.

"The King himself did us the Honour sometimes to accept of Part of our Wine and Provisions, which the Earl sent to him. The Earl . . . was full of Civility to the other Commissioners; and the Port we lived in at Oxford, by the Earl's Direction, and managed by his Officers, was full of State and Nobleness."

Some members of the Committee, moved by the early successes of the Royalists, made use of their time at Oxford to enter into secret compacts with the King. Edmund Waller by his own confession was one of these, and the eagerness which they showed to abandon the Parliamentary side had, no doubt, much to do with the manner in which Northumberland's proposals were in the end rejected by Charles. Whitelocke has left an account of the manner in which the negotiations were brought to a conclusion. When Northumberland began to read the terms offered by Parliament, "with a sober and stout carriage," the King interrupted testily. "Will your Majesty give me leave to proceed?" demanded the Earl, and Charles with evident ill-will, nodded his head in consent. He continued to interrupt, however, and the proceedings were adjourned for a time. Finally the King promised to send his reply (his "*assent in writing*," if we are to believe Whitelocke) to the Commissioners by the hand of his secretary, Heron. Next day a royal letter did indeed reach Northumberland, but "quite contrary to what was concluded the night before." The Commissioners "pressed upon the King his royal word," but Charles answered that "he had altered his mind," and was no longer prepared to accept the terms offered by his subjects.² Northumberland at once communicated this unhappy result to Parliament;

¹ Whitelocke; *Memorials*.

² *Ibid.*

and the Committee was ordered to break off negotiations forthwith and return to London. Waller's intrigues with the Royalists had not as yet come to light, but strong suspicions of treachery prevailed among the advanced section of the Commons, and Northumberland and others "were looked upon with great jealousy as persons engaged by the King, and disinclined to the Parliament."¹ To such an extent was this feeling carried that a letter, written from Oxford by Northumberland to his wife, was seized and deliberately opened by Henry Martyn "to see if it contained treason to the Commonwealth." An action of this kind would have been outrageous at any time; but it was rendered the more disgraceful by the fact that the letter was addressed to the young Countess, then on the eve of her first confinement. Furious at the insult, Northumberland hastened to Westminster, and sought out Henry Martyn. He found the culprit conversing with his friends in the Painted Chamber, and at once demanded an explanation. Martyn's sole reply was that he felt "no whit sorry" for what he had done; whereupon Northumberland struck him several times across the head and shoulders with his cane. Swords were drawn, but Martyn's friends rushed between the combatants and forced them apart. Martyn does not appear to have been much the worse for the thrashing which he had received, for he at once lodged a complaint before the House of Commons; while Northumberland, on his side, made a personal explanation to the Lords.

A joint conference of both Houses having been summoned to discuss the affair, it was finally decided to issue an injunction forbidding either Martyn or the Earl to indulge in any further hostilities, under pain of prosecution as enemies to the State. Northumberland expressed himself as willing to give Martyn satisfaction for the caning so publicly administered; but, whether from regard to the order of Parliament or from other motives, the overzealous member sent no challenge, and the matter (which

¹ Clarendon, iv. 17.

had been the talk of London for weeks) was allowed to drop.¹

Late in May, Waller's secret negotiations with the King were discovered; and Waller, Tompkins, and Challoner were arrested on the 31st of the same month. The poet-politician, fairly caught, and fearing for his life, offered to give evidence implicating several members of the Peace Party. Conway and Portland he accused of plotting directly against Parliament, and Northumberland of being favourable to their designs and refusing to take part in the conspiracy only because he feared its result. Whatever may have been the truth concerning the charges against Conway and Portland, it is certain that Northumberland at least was absolutely guiltless of any intrigue against the cause which he professed. Waller's motives for thus calumniating the Earl are variously stated. Some authorities ascribe his action to mere cowardice, and the wish to protect himself by involving more powerful persons in his own ruin. Others attempt to lend an air of romance to the affair, by hinting that the contemptuous rejection of his addresses by the fair "Saccharissa" had inspired the poet with feelings of revenge against that lady's distinguished relative. Others again hold that Waller himself had been misled by Sir Henry Percy into believing the Earl a trimmer like Holland or Bedford; and this is certainly the most charitable view to take of the false evidence. As for Northumberland, when informed of what had occurred, he demanded an immediate investigation. The two men, accuser and accused, were brought face to face in the presence of a committee of both Houses, with the result that Waller, after several times contradicting himself, broke down completely, and the Earl was unanimously exonerated from all blame.

The rejection of the Peace resolution in the Commons on July 9, and the disinclination of Essex and the Parliamentary leaders to consider further proposals, caused Northumberland to become seriously discouraged for

¹ D'Ewes's *Diary*. *Harleian MSS.* 164, fol. 372b.

the first time since the war began. His wife had given birth to a son and heir at Petworth on July 4, and a few weeks later the Earl asked permission of Parliament to pay a brief visit to his Sussex residence. In the society of his family he hoped to be able to shake off the gloom occasioned by recent disappointments; but unfortunately his motives for thus retiring for a time from public life were misrepresented by the more fanatical members of the war party, and there were whispers that he meditated a surrender to the King. Lords Holland, Bedford, and Clare had already gone to Oxford, without leave, for the purpose of making their peace, and Northumberland was suspected of a like design.¹ Henry Martyn and others of his kind were particularly busy in spreading these reports; but the Earl disappointed them by returning faithfully to London at the end of the year, when both Houses gave him a hearty welcome, and his enemies were once more put to silence.²

The Civil War had now entered upon its second stage, so disastrous to the hitherto successful Royalist arms. Pym and Hampden were both dead, and the influence of Oliver Cromwell had begun to make itself felt, alike in Army and Parliament. In January 1644 a Scottish army once more crossed the Tweed; and on February 16 the Joint Committee of Both Kingdoms assumed control of the Parliamentary cause. To this committee Northumberland was appointed; and among his colleagues were his cousins Essex and Warwick, with Manchester, Fairfax, Sir William Waller, St. John, Oliver Cromwell, Haselrig, and the two Vanes, for England; and Loudoun, Maitland, Johnston of Warriston, and Barclay for the sister realm. We find Northumberland giving umbrage to the Commons and the Scottish Covenanters by his persistent pleas for peace; and in November 1644 he was censured by the Lower House for having communicated to the Lords an offer of mediation, personally made to him by the Comte d'Harcourt³ on behalf of Louis

¹ Clarendon.

² *Ibid.*

³ The French Ambassador.

XIV. and the Queen Regent of France.¹ Charles and his advisers seem to have appreciated the Earl's efforts at conciliation as little as did the Parliamentary war-party, for in December Northumberland, together with Pembroke and Salisbury, were indicted at Shrewsbury for High Treason. The principal charge against them was that they had "furnished assistance to the Parliament then in Rebellion."² Charles, however, failed to find a jury of their peers to bring in a bill of attainder against the accused lords, and the indictment was perforce allowed to lapse.³

Northumberland took a prominent part in the final attempt made by the Royalist and Parliamentary factions to come to an understanding and end the "Treaty" of Civil War. On January 30, 1645, he was one of the sixteen Commissioners sent by the Parliament to meet sixteen of the King's party at Uxbridge, in that "*good House at the end of ye Town*" which still stands in fair preservation, and is locally known as "the Treaty House."⁴ The thirty-two Commissioners were instructed "to take into consideration the grievances of which each party complained, and to propose those remedies that might be mutually agreeable." The King himself attended this gathering, and held a species of miniature Court in the "Treaty House."⁵

From the very first it became apparent that the presence of the Scottish Covenanters was certain to prove a cause of discord. They had come thither dourly

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons.*

² Whitelocke; *Memorials*, p. 78.

³ Whitelocke.

⁴ The "Treaty House," which had been the residence of Sir John Bennet, Judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, afterwards became an inn under the sign of the "Crown."

⁵ Charles received his visitors in the oak-panelled apartment which is erroneously shown to visitors as the "Treaty Room," but which was really the Presence Chamber. The actual meeting-place of the Commissioners was a larger room (now divided into two) facing on the High Street of Uxbridge.

determined to advance their own interests at all hazards, and to make no compromise either with the Royalists or with the favourers of peace in the Parliament. Even before the proceedings began, a dispute was caused by Loudoun, the Chief Scottish Commissioner, who had the effrontery to demand precedence over all the English representatives. This claim occasioned intense anger among the English of both parties, and might have ended all further discussion had not Northumberland come forward with a suggestion. "The Earl of Northumberland," writes Whitelocke, "smiled at this contest, and seemed to condemn it; — of whose great honour and family and antiquity the Scots could not be ignorant; nor of the differences between that" (*i.e.* the Earl's honourable descent) "and the family of the Earl of Loudoun. . . . Yet Northumberland moved, for the satisfaction of the Scots, that the Chancellor and one of the Scots Commissioners might sit at the upper end of the Table."¹ After some argument, the Earl's proposal was accepted, and the English Lord Chancellor presided jointly with Loudoun over the assembly.

It was agreed that the "Three Propositions" which were to be laid before the King—*i.e.* the questions relating to Religion, the Army, and Ireland—should be discussed in rotation, three days being allotted to each proposition. If, after nine days, no conclusion had been reached, a further debate of three days' duration was to be allowed on the subject of Religion, and so on with the other points. If, at the end of twenty-one working days, no satisfactory conclusion had been arrived at, the proceedings were to be considered at an end.² A week had hardly passed by, before Northumberland realised that the gathering was mere waste of time. Some few of the Royalists, such as Hertford and Southampton, were sincerely desirous of promoting peace, but Charles himself was, as usual, obstinate at the wrong time; and no amount of argument could "reconcile the King's unbending de-

¹ *Memorials*, p. 127.

² Rushworth, v. 861.

votion to Episcopacy, with the equally unbending Presbyterianism of the Scots."¹ The character of the "Three Propositions" themselves show how little the spirit of compromise appealed to the Scottish delegates or their English allies of the advanced section. Charles was asked: (1) to take the Covenant, to assent to the abolition of Episcopacy and the Prayer-book, and the establishment of Presbyterianism and the Directory; (2) to consent to the control of both Army and Navy by a Commission nominated by Parliament; and (3) to authorise the passing of an Act making void the Irish Cessation, and permitting Parliament to prosecute the war in Ireland without hindrance from the Royalists.

In place of the first Proposition, the Oxford clergy offered a broad scheme of religious toleration; but the Independents and Scots, suspicious of the King's good faith would accept no alternative measures. The debates on the other two Propositions ended as unsatisfactorily. To the military Commission the King might well have agreed at the time. He actually did so a twelvemonth later, when it was too late. The list of Commissioners put forward by Parliament was, on the whole, a moderate one. Northumberland's name held first place among the nominees, a fact which, as Lord Southampton pointed out, was in itself "an earnest of fair play." But Charles, persuaded, it is said, by Prince Rupert, refused to surrender even temporarily his claim of absolute control over the land and sea forces. Day after day was squandered in "exhaustive discussions"; and at length, on February 22, the negotiations were broken off. Some of the Royalist delegates asked for a further extension of time, but the other side answered that "if the King had consented to *any one* of the Propositions, it might have been some Encouragement to move the Parliament for longer Time; but, as things were, it could not be expected."²

¹ Gardiner, v. 2; p. 121.

² Whitelocke, *Memorials*, p. 133.

From Northumberland's letters to Leicester and others, it is clear that the negative result of the Uxbridge deliberations at once saddened and disgusted him. To quote Clarendon: "The repulse he had formerly received at Oxford upon his addresses thither, and the fair escape he had made afterwards from the jealousy of the Parliament, had wrought so far upon him that he resolved no more to depend upon the one, or provoke the other."¹ He was still, however, regarded as the leader of the Independent Party in Parliament; and as such helped to secure the passage of the "Self-Denying Ordinance," and took a prominent part in the organisation of the new model army.²

Few men in England had suffered more by the war than Northumberland, and even his enemies in the House of Commons could not but admit that he had borne his enormous losses with noble disinterestedness. Soon after the Uxbridge Treaty his financial affairs became well-nigh desperate, owing to the devastation of his northern estates, and to huge arrearages of rent. His friends urged him to claim some compensation from Parliament in return for the countless sacrifices which he had made for what he held to be the rightful cause. For over two years, although on the verge of bankruptcy, he refused to embarrass the Houses with his personal troubles; but at last, early in 1647, he was forced by necessity to present a memorial representing that "*by those unhappy Wars (besides many Damages he hath sustained in his Woods, Collieries, the loss of his office of Lord High Admiral, &c.) he hath lost in clear Rents above £36,000.*"³ Moreover, land was become of such small value that no money could be raised by the sale of any of his estates. A detailed statement of the Earl's losses accompanies his petition. This latter document, a dupli-

Heavy
losses, and
partial com-
pensation.

¹ *Great Rebellion*, viii. 244.

² Gardiner, ii. 189.

³ *Lords' and Commons' Journals*.

cate of which is preserved in the Alnwick MSS.,¹ ran as follows:—

	£	s.	d
" <i>Arrears of Rent in Yorkshire</i> . . .	14,739	12	8
" " <i>Northumberland</i> . . .	13,500	8	11
" " <i>Cumberland</i> . . .	981	13	10
" " <i>elsewhere</i> . . .	5,468	8	1
<i>Destruction of Wressill Castle</i> . . .	1,000	8	1
<i>Damage to Tadcaster by Royalists</i> . . .	300	0	0
<i>Spoiling of Northumbrian Woodes</i> . . .	570	0	0
<i>Houses burnt, &c. &c.</i> . . .	1,200	0	0
<i>Arrears for Tynemouth</i> . . .	3,274	6	11
<i>Paid in Ready Money to the Scots</i> . . .	1,500	0	0
<i>Total</i> . . .	42,554	11	0

The House of Lords cordially recommended the memorial to the Commons "in regard to the Faithfulness of the Earl of Northumberland in a Time wherein the services of a Person of his Eminence were of great Use and Advantage to the Parliament and Cause."² In the Lower House, however, his bitter foes of the extreme party (or "Levellers," as they were now beginning to be styled) saw fit to oppose the granting of any compensation, and Henry Martyn, who had never forgiven the thrashing which he had received at Northumberland's hands, used all his influence against the latter. Better feelings conquered, nevertheless; and the Commons, by a vote of 75 against 55, granted to the Earl "the sum of £10,000, to be paid by the Committee of Goldsmiths' Hall out of the Fines and Compositions of Delinquents."³

Wressill Castle, that venerable monument of the fifth Earl's magnificence, had been partially dismantled by Cromwell, under the pretext that the neighbourhood was a Royalist one, and that the mansion, if left standing, might

¹ "Return presented to Parliament of My Lord's Damages," *Alnwick MSS.*: quoted by De Fonblanque.

² *Lords' Journals*.

³ *Commons' Journals*, Jan. 19, 1647.

fall into the hands of the King's Yorkshire supporters. As Wressill was by no means a strongly fortified place, it is probable that the destruction wrought there by Cromwell's troops had its real origin in the dislike of the extremists for the Earl. That this was indeed so, seems the more likely from the fact that, during the year following the grant of compensation to the Earl, a second and more determined attack was made on the castle by the "Ironsides," and this without any warning or other notification to the owner, and apparently without any order from either Parliament or the Committee of Safety. Northumberland's servants were taken completely by surprise at this arbitrary act. William Plaxton, the Earl's agent at Wressill, wrote in haste to London: "*I am very sorrye to see the spoyle that is already made of his Lordshyp's Castile, with this forenoone's work: there is fiftene men throwing down the out Batlement; I thinke by to-morrow noone they will have gone rounde the Castell. The Stones are for the moste parte all Smashed to peeces; and if there be not some speedy course taken for to preserve the Timber, Lead, Glass, and Wainscot, by taking them doune at his Lordshyp's cost, they will be all spoyled and broaken to peeces. I pray, see if you can get an Order from the Committee to stay the proceedings till we can take course to preserve these things for his Lordshyp's use. The workmen do not looke to save any of the materiels, but take the readiest course to throwe donne the walls; which they will doe inward, upon the floores and sealing, as well as outward upon the ground.*"¹ The ceilings at Wressill were, it will be remembered, handsomely painted and ornamented with verses and quaint devices composed by Skelton and other poets of the early days of Henry VIII. Before a stay of proceedings could be invoked, most of these precious relics of the past had been wantonly destroyed. Two days later, on December 30th, Robert Thompson, another of Northumberland's servants, informed his master that "*all the Battlements to the rooffe, on the fronte of the Castle (excepting*

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*; Wm. Plaxton to Pritchett, the Earl's steward at Northumberland House, Dec. 28, 1648.

*the High Tower over the Gate) are bett dounne. . . . I conceyve £2000 will not repair the ruynes here."*¹

It was not the intention of the Earl's enemies in Parliament that Wressill should be repaired. Some eight months later, in August 1649, the Council of State wrote to Northumberland in the following unmistakable terms: "The Castle of Wressill was appointed . . . to be demolished, but it is not yet made untenable. Signify to us whether you yourself will order its effectual demolishing, or whether we shall give order to some others for the doing of it."² To this the Earl answered that, such was the condition of the castle, no danger remained of its ever serving as shelter for a hostile garrison. Its outer walls and other defences had been levelled with the earth, and only a portion of the dwelling-house remained. This, he trusted, the Council would not ask him to destroy, as his race had always been deeply attached to Wressill, which was their only place of residence in the neighbourhood, and he hoped, when peace was restored, to be able to rebuild the old mansion. Sentimental reasons were the last to which the then governing body was likely to listen. The sole reply of the Council was a warrant commanding the "complete demolition" of the castle, with the exception of the steward's quarters in the southern wing.³ Only ten days were allowed for the carrying out of this harsh behest; and so, after hundreds of years, Wressill ceased to be the Yorkshire home of the Percies.

When the King rode out of London in 1642, he was accompanied by his two elder sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York; while the younger children—Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth, were left at Whitehall in the care of their governess, the Marchioness of Dorset. Parliament treated them with consideration,

Northumberland as guardian of the Princes.

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*; Robert Thompson to the Earl's steward in London.

² *State Papers.*

³ *Ibid.*, Warrant dated April 7, 1650.

merely taking care that they should not escape. After the death of Lady Dorset in 1645,¹ it was decided by both Houses that no more suitable guardian could be chosen, for the little prince and princess, than the Earl of Northumberland. Northumberland undertook the duties of the charge with pleasure. He may have remembered that when misfortune brooded over his own house,—when his father was a prisoner in the Tower, and when himself, his brother, and sisters were frowned upon by the world, they had found a true friend and protector in the then Queen of England, mother of Charles I. Certain it is that even the most captious follower of the King could not deny that the royal children were treated by their new governor with every kindness and respect.² They were first placed under his charge on March 19, 1645,³ with a salary of £3000 *per annum*,⁴ the Houses of Parliament taking “into consideration the great losses of this noble Earl from his Affection to the Publick.”⁵ On September 11, 1645, for reasons presently to be discovered, the annual allowance was increased, the House of Commons voting “that £5000 a year be paid to the Earl of Northumberland for the keeping of the King’s younger children in an honourable way,” and also “that the Earl of Northumberland shall have the use of Whitehall, St. James’s House, Somerset House, or any other of the King’s Houses as he shall find Occasion . . . with such Hangings, Bedding, Plate, Silver Vessels, or other necessary and fitting Accomodation, as he shall require.”⁶ An additional grant of £580 *per annum* for medical attendance was also made, and several physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries were appointed to wait upon the Duke of Gloucester and his sister. In fact the value of these children, and of the little Duke in particular, had become suddenly and greatly enhanced in Parliamentary

¹ Clarendon (no friend of the Earl) says that he “received and treated them in all Respects as was Suitable to their Birth and Station, and his own Duty.”

² Whitlocke; *Memorials*, p. 137.

³ Gardiner, *Lords’ Journals*.

⁴ Whitlocke.

⁵ *Commons’ Journals*.

estimation. The failure of the Uxbridge negotiations and the King's obstinate refusal to come to terms had inspired the leaders of popular opinion with a new project—to wit, the deposition of Charles, the proclamation of young Gloucester as King Henry IX., and the elevation of Northumberland to the post of Lord Protector.¹ On March 21, 1646,² we find Salvetti writing to Cardinal de Retz as if this scheme had been finally decided upon, and dwelling at some length upon the good qualities which Northumberland would bring to the Regency.³

The capture of the Duke of York by Fairfax, after the fall of Oxford (June 20), put a sudden end to the movement in favour of Gloucester's succession. It was now determined by Parliament that, unless the King came speedily to terms, he should be deposed in favour of his second son. Northumberland, however, continued to be the person most favoured for the office of Regent, or Protector; and York was sent to join his brother and sister under the Earl's guardianship—a sum of £7500 being voted for his maintenance, and, later on, an additional £500 a year “to expend upon his Recreations and Field Sports.”⁴

Charles was surrendered by the Scots in January 1647; and in June of the same year we find him a state prisoner at Richmond. Plague having broken out in London, Northumberland asked leave of Parliament to take the royal children to Syon House, “where they might be free of the infection.”⁵ It is probable that the Earl's real motive was a humane desire to afford the fallen monarch such consolation as renewed intercourse with his family might bring. Certainly, while the plague had infested London since the autumn of 1646, the guardian of the children did not propose their removal to Syon

¹ *Lords' Journals*, vii. 277, 327.

² The day of the defeat at Stow of Lord Astley's force—the last body of troops in arms for the King.

³ Salvetti to Goudi; *Add. MSS.*, B.M., 27, 962, K., fol. 417.

⁴ Whitelocke, p. 228.

⁵ *Commons' Journals*, July 26, 1647.

until their father had taken up his residence at Richmond hard by. Whether Parliament understood the Earl's kindly intentions or not, the required leave was granted after some demur;¹ the Commons merely adding a proviso that no Royalist spies, or "persons likely to give the Duke of York evil counsel," should be allowed access to Syon. Northumberland did not apparently understand these instructions as excluding the visits of the King himself. We read that, on August 23, 1647, the royal captive was allowed to spend a day in the company of his little ones—the two younger of whom he had not seen since his departure from London, five years before. In the *Daily Post* (a news-sheet preserved in the British Museum) under date "August 20-27," the following is recorded:—

"Syon House; 23 August. His Majesty came hither to see his Children, with one Troop of Horse, and the Commissioners; and dined here." We have some account of what took place on this occasion, from the pen of that staunch Cavalier, Sir Thomas Herbert, the King's Groom of the Chambers. "The Earl" (of Northumberland), writes Herbert, "welcomed the King with a very noble Treat; and his Followers had their Tables richly furnished: by his Behaviour expressing extraordinary Contentment to see the King and his Children together, after such various Chances, and so long a Separation."²

On the following day (August 24) Charles took up his residence at Hampton Court, whence he continued at frequent intervals to visit Syon. In the *Daily Post*, for instance, under date of August 29, we are told that "The Duke of York is at Syon; and the King hunted at Richmond Park, and afterwards dined with his Children at Syon."³ For some time Northumberland assumed all the responsibility for these visits, which were strongly condemned by the "Levellers" and fanatics in the Commons.

¹ *Lords' Journals*, 330, 357.

² *Memoirs of the last two years of . . . King Charles the First.*

³ *Daily Post* news-sheet, under *Occurrences* (British Museum).

But at length, more generous counsels prevailed, and in October the Earl had the satisfaction of obtaining Parliamentary sanction for what he had done,¹ and permission from the Council to allow Charles and his children free access to each other. This result was most encouraging to the King, who availed himself of the privilege to the full. According to Clarendon (who, however, fails to give Northumberland credit for the part which he had taken in the matter): "The King enjoyed himself much more to his content at Hampton Court than he had of late; but that which pleased his Majesty most was that his Children were permitted to come to him, in whom he took great Delight. They were all at the Earl of Northumberland's House at Syon, from the time the King came to Hampton Court; and had Liberty to attend his Majesty when he pleased; so that sometimes he sent for them to come to Hampton Court; and sometimes he went to them at Syon; which gave him great Satisfaction."² After Charles had left the less strict confinement of Hampton Court, Northumberland brought York, Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth to visit him, first to Caversham House,³ and afterwards to Maidenhead.

Certain events which occurred in the following winter and spring, however, had the effect of putting a stop to this consoling between the King and his children. Escape of
the Duke of
York. The project of placing James, Duke of York, upon the throne had grown in favour with all shades of opinion among the Parliamentarians; and, as time went on, it became more and more probable that the Civil War would be brought to a bloodless conclusion by this means.⁴ But the agents of the King and the Prince of Wales were determined at all hazards to resist the movement in favour of York's succession, and if

¹ *Journals of Lords and Commons.*

² *Great Rebellion*, vol. iii. Part I.

³ Lord Craven's seat, near Reading.

⁴ Walker; *History of Independence*, vol. i. 107.

possible to prevent the Duke from accepting the crown at the hands of Parliament. Charles ill repaid the latitude which Northumberland allowed him in conversation with his children, by using all his parental authority to persuade York into attempting an escape from Syon. Relying upon the royal word that no harm was intended against his guardianship, Northumberland also permitted a certain Colonel John Bamfield or Bamford¹ to have frequent access to the Duke; and Bamfield, while ostensibly interested only in the lad's field-sports, laboured secretly to further the plans for his flight. York was easily prevailed upon to make the attempt; but the first plot was betrayed to Northumberland before it could be carried into effect. The Earl, indignant at what he deemed the royal abuse of his confidence, announced the discovery to Parliament, and asked permission to resign the charge of the King's second son. Both Houses united in pressing him to continue his guardianship for another year at least;² and he eventually agreed to do so, but only on condition that the prince solemnly pledged himself to make no further effort at breaking bounds "even at the instigation of His Majesty." The *parole* was readily given. "On February 22, 1648, was read a letter from the Duke of York, of the twentieth of this instant February, *whereby he engaged his honour and faith never to engage himself any more in such business.*"³ Upon this understanding York was allowed the same liberty as before, save that his lodgings, together with those of his brother and sister, were removed from Syon to St. James's Palace.

A Stuart promise, however, was one thing, and its fulfilment another, as none should have been better aware than the head of the House of Percy. Colonel John Bamford had shrewdly managed to keep his connection with the abortive plot a secret; and was thus enabled to continue

¹ Clarendon states that his real name was Bamford, and that he was of Irish birth. A family of the name was for some brief time settled in the county of Kilkenny, where the estate of Castle Bamford still bears the name.

² *Commons' Journals.*

³ *Ibid.*

his work as intermediary between York and the King. Charles, or his agents, at once set to work to overcome the Duke's scruples against the breaking of vows; and, by fair means or foul, to snatch this dangerous, if unwilling, rival of the vanquished monarch out of Parliamentary keeping. There was little time to be lost, if the proclamation of James as King was to be prevented. Already the Council of War (including Cromwell and Ireton) had formally approved of the deposition of Charles, in favour of his second son,¹ and the twenty-fourth of April 1648 had been chosen as the date upon which a motion to that effect was to be brought forward in the House of Commons. It was decided that the Duke must be either cajoled or bullied into breaking his *parole*; and Colonel Bamford was the instrument chosen for this delicate work. Bamford had his instructions from the King directly. He was to enlarge upon the heinous sin of filial disobedience, and to persuade Prince James that "*as he was under age,² his word was not binding*" without the consent of his father. "This sophistry," says Gardiner, "obtained ready credence." The young Duke agreed to do as his father wished; and Bamford at once set out to prepare for this second, and more successful, enterprise.

The flight from St. James's Palace was to take place on April 21—three days before the dreaded motion could be heard in Parliament, and just two months after York had "engaged his honour and faith" to attempt escape no more. The plans of Bamford and his associates were carefully laid. "For some evenings before," says Gardiner (whose account follows the Clarendon State Papers³ and Lady Anne Halkett⁴), "the Duke amused himself by playing hide and seek with his brother and sister in the apartments which they occupied in St. James's, in order

¹ Walker; *History of Independence*, vol. i. p. 107.

² *Apologie of Colonel Bamfield or Bamford* (1685): Gardiner's *Great Civil War*, vol. iv. p. 100.

³ *Clarendon State Papers*, ii. Appendix XLVII.

⁴ *Autobiography of Lady Anne Halkett*, p. 20.

to accustom his guardians to his absence from the room where he had been usually found at that hour.

"In the meantime Anne Murray,¹ a sister of the well-known Will Murray, had ordered a tailor to make for the boy a lady's dress. The order almost led to a discovery of the plot, as the tailor was startled at the measurements given to him. He had never, he said, made a dress in which the size of the waist was so large in proportion to the lady's height. The tailor, however, kept counsel, and, on the evening of the 21st, the Duke, saying that he was going off to his game, went into the garden, and opening the gate with a key with which he had been supplied, stepped out into the Park, where Bamfield awaited him with a cloak and wig. Thus partially disguised, the Duke was taken in a coach to a house in which Anne Murray completed the metamorphosis, clothing him in a 'mixed mohair of a light hair-colour and black,' and a scarlet under petticoat.

"In this guise, making, as Anne Murray thought, a very pretty girl, the boy, still accompanied by Bamfield, who now assumed the character of a brother, took a passage in a barge to Gravesend, where the pair found a vessel awaiting them, and put to sea before orders had been given to stop the ports. Two days later they landed at Rammekens, safe from all pursuit. Yet the Duke continued to keep up his disguise, after all necessity for it was at an end. On the night after his arrival he shocked the hostess of the inn in which he slept by rejecting the services of her maids when he undressed, and by insisting on occupying the same room as Bamfield."² The expenses incurred by Bamfield, or Bamford, in the affair amounted (according to his own statement) to £19,559; and he received, in all, from the Royalists £20,000.³

¹ Afterwards Lady Anne Halkett.

² Gardiner; *Great Civil War*, vol. iv. 100, 101 (following the accounts of the enlargement in *Clarendon State Papers* and Lady Anne Halkett's *Autobiography*).

³ *Clarendon State Papers*; Calendar i. entry 2982. Bamford eventually forsook the Stuart cause, and served under Cromwell and William III.

Naturally the flight of James, almost on the eve of his proclamation as King, created a profound sensation in Parliamentary ranks ; and there were not wanting those who insinuated that Northumberland had connived at the escape. But after a full inquiry into the affair the Earl was exonerated from all blame. "On April 29, 1648, the two Houses concurred in the Declaration that they are fully satisfied that the said Earl hath discharged his Duty and Trust as far as could be expected from Him."¹ Parliament now turned its attention to the Duke of Gloucester once again, and a considerable party advocated his elevation to the throne in the room of his brother. But the time for such compromises and make-shifts had gone by. The irreconcilables in the Commons would hear no more of kings and princes, and the victorious Northern army, with Cromwell at its head, was already marching upon London.

Northumberland, like others of the moderate party, at first looked upon the Parliamentary army and its nominal commander, Fairfax, as the best safe-guard of the country against the violence of the Levellers and Agitators in the Lower House. Last efforts to save the King's life. In company with sixty-two other members of both Houses, headed by the Lord Chancellor and Speaker, he joined the troops encamped on Hounslow Heath under Fairfax ; and it was at his invitation that the commanders met at Syon, where he joined in signing a declaration pledging those of the Lords and Commons present "to live and die with Sir Thomas Fairfax and his Army." The Parliamentary delegates rode back to Westminster protected by a military force. It soon became apparent, however, that a general more powerful than Fairfax had ranged himself on the side of the extremists, and in opposition to all compromise. The name of Oliver Cromwell became, for the time, the rallying cry of the King's deadly enemies. Colonel Lloyd, one of

¹ *Journals of the Lords and Commons.*

Cromwell's trusted officers, denounced the Earls of Northumberland and Pembroke as traitors to the Commonwealth, and openly accused them of "holding treasonable secret negotiations with the King." The Earls, while admitting that they desired to reopen negotiations, absolutely denied that they had done anything without the consent of Parliament, and insisted upon a public inquiry. Their innocence was fully established; whereupon they pleaded parliamentary privilege, and demanded the punishment of Lloyd. The Commons, against all precedent, refused to summon the offender to the bar of their House; and Northumberland and Pembroke were referred to the Law Courts for their remedy. Soon after a resolution was carried by the extremist members, prohibiting all further conferences with the King.

Nevertheless, during Cromwell's absence in the North, the Moderates and Presbyterians made another vigorous effort; and Parliament, acting upon a petition drawn up by the City of London (and presented in the House of Lords by Northumberland, and in the Commons by Holles and Vane) resolved to give the King a final opportunity of coming to terms with his subjects. Fifteen commissioners were chosen on behalf of both Houses; among the number being Northumberland, Say, Holles, Vane, and Pierrepont. The proceedings opened on September 18, 1648, at Newport, Isle of Wight. Charles, who was freed on *parole* from Carisbrooke Castle, occupied the house of one William Hopkins in the little town, and the commissioners sat in the Town Hall. In the *New Post*, a news-sheet dated September 22, 1648,¹ is the following account of the opening speech of Northumberland, who presided, and the King's reply:—"The Earl of Northumberland, as a Testimony of Loyalty and Fidelity both to the King and Kingdom, declared to His Majesty his Sense and Resolutions for Peace, which followeth in these words;—'That the memorable Houses of Parliament, being deeply moved with the great Sufferings

¹ Preserved in the British Museum.

and Oppressions of this languishing Kingdom, occasioned by the Commotions and Risings within several Parts thereof, have commanded his Lordship, and the rest of the Honourable Commissioners to attend his Royal Person, and to treat with His Majesty and the Lords and Gentlemen on his Part, for a safe and well-governed Peace'; further declaring that none could desire Peace more than his Lordship and that to his uttermost he would labour to the Conclusion of Peace by the Treaty; he wronged no Man, but would labour to be a Friend to all in the Common-Weal of this Kingdom. His Lordship having thus declared himself, His Majesty the King replied that nothing should be wanting in him for promoting so great and good a Work, declaring a Blessing from Heaven upon the present Treaty begun for the Establishment of a Happy Peace."

These fair words seemed to augur well for the success of the conference, but Charles showed much of his old obstinacy, and negotiations were prolonged until the end of November. This gave the opponents of royalty ample time to rally their forces. In Parliament Ireton urged that the King, like Strafford, had aimed at establishing an absolute monarchy, and that, like Strafford, he should be brought to trial. The "Levellers," with the army at their back, proclaimed their absolute distrust of Charles and his promises, and condemned the House of Lords for holding that "His Majesty's Answers to the Propositions of Parliament are a Ground for the Settlement of Peace." In November, the Council of the Army met in St. Albans Abbey. Only officers were allowed representation, and the "Levellers" being thus robbed of their chief strength, Fairfax and other moderately inclined generals made a stout effort in favour of peace and settlement. Charles, however, rejected their overtures when laid before him at Newport—and thereby practically signed his own death-warrant. On November 27 the Parliamentary Commissioners took leave of the King, and returned to London, bringing with them his final answers. These were read

in both Houses on December 1, and occasioned grave disappointment to the Moderate Party. In the Commons Sir Harry Vane bitterly assailed the King; while Ireton, Harrison, and the "Levellers" demanded the dissolution of Parliament on the ground that the Commons had betrayed their trust by holding parley with such a monarch. Meanwhile Charles had been seized by order of the Council of Officers, and conveyed to a secure prison in Hurst Castle; and on December 2 Fairfax took up his quarters in Whitehall, and the army entered London.

"Pride's Purge," by which those members unfavourable to the proposed trial of the King (201 in all) were forcibly expelled from the House of Commons, occurred on December 6. On the same night Cromwell, fresh from his northern triumphs, joined the other commanders; and, while affecting to have been unprepared for Colonel Pride's violent action, at once lent it his powerful support. At the great soldier's heels, Harry Martyn and other irreconcilables ventured back to Westminster, vowing that their day had come at last, and that not only "Charles Stuart," but the Earl of Northumberland and the other advocates of peace, should feel the weight of their vengeance. Thereafter events fell out with ominous swiftness. The "Rump" Parliament—that is to say, the Commons section of that body—voted that the King should be brought to trial "on the charge of levying war against the people of England." When the Bill was brought to the Upper House, however, on January 3, the few peers who dared to be present unanimously refused it a second reading, and declared its terms illegal and unconstitutional.¹ The names of the lords who thus voted were:—the Earls of Northumberland, Mulgrave, Pembroke, Rutland, Kent, Manchester, and Denbigh,² and Lords North, Hunsdon, Maynard, Dacre, and Berkeley.³

The Commons utterly ignored this protest; and twelve

¹ *Lords' Journals.*

² Denbigh was Speaker of the Upper House.

³ *Lords' Journals.*

days later the King was brought from Windsor to St. James's. The story of the proceedings which followed is sadly familiar to every reader of English history. On January 27 Charles was found guilty and condemned by the self-styled "High Court of Justice"; and on the 30th he went to the block with the same simple heroism which had characterised the death of his grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots. Whatever may have been the faults and shortcomings of the Stuarts in life, they did not fear to die like princes.

On the eve of the execution Northumberland wrote and despatched to both Houses of Parliament a letter of final protest against the terrible step which the Commons, against the vote of the Upper House, had unconstitutionally sanctioned.¹ The Earl was practically a prisoner in London. Howling mobs of the Leveller faction surrounded his gates night and day, crying out that, like his brother and sister,² he was "a traitor to the Commonwealth," and in conspiracy to liberate the King. He did not hesitate, however, to show himself openly in the streets, or to boldly announce that he, at least, of those that had striven against absolute monarchy, now sternly condemned the sentence passed upon the King. In the Commons his letter was destroyed unread. In the Lords Denbigh announced from the Woolsack that such an epistle had been received from the Earl, and it was ordered to be sealed by the Speaker's seal.³ It would be interesting to learn what eventually became of this document. Probably it was made away with during the days of the Commonwealth. Immediately after the tragedy at Whitehall, Northumberland left London "without permission of the Council," betaking himself to Syon House. Thence he sent word to the "Rump" Parliament, that he intended to take no further part in the government of

¹ *Lords' Journals.*

² Lady Carlisle, when she perceived (after the failure of the Newport negotiations) that the King's life was in danger, had forsaken the Parliamentary party, and was presently to suffer for her change of views.

³ *Lords' Journals.*

the realm, and asking to be relieved of the custody of the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Elizabeth. Lest these fatherless children should fall into ill hands, however, he suggested that their guardianship should be given to Lady Leicester, to whose motherly care he knew that it was safe to confide them.¹ Parliam. †, or rather the Council, consented after some haggling to this proposition, and the little Duke and his sister were on June 11 transferred from Syon to peaceful Penshurst.² But to Northumberland's announcement of his withdrawal from public life, those of the "Rump" affected to turn a deaf ear. His name and influence, it was felt, were too powerful to be lost; and there existed in many quarters a conviction that he might, in emergency, prove the one man capable of balancing the scale between the army and the Parliament. Accordingly, on February 5 while he still resided at Syon, his name was added by the Commons to the Committee chosen "to consider the settlement of the Government of England and Ireland."³ Northumberland was not to be drawn from his fixed resolution, and refused to attend the sittings of the Committee, or to recognise it in any way. As soon as he had safely escorted the royal children to Penshurst, he himself withdrew to Petworth, there to reside in retirement until the dawn of better days.

We will now revert for a space to the Earl's only brother, Sir Henry Percy. When he was expelled from Parliament for connection with the Army Plot and permitted to withdraw overseas, he became (as has been related) an active Royalist agent in Paris. Possessed of much shrewdness and a notable talent for intrigue, he was doubtless of great use to his party at that period. His influence, moreover, was considerable, for not only was he the Queen's especial favourite, but he also occupied the position of heir pre-

Sir Henry
Percy and
his further
doings.

¹ Collins' *Peerage* (ed. Brydges) ii. 350.

² As will be seen, they were not long to enjoy the tranquillity of Lady Leicester's home.

³ *Commons' Journals*.

sumptive to the earldom and estates of Northumberland—the Earl being then (1641-42) a widower without male issue. Shortly before his connection with the Army Plot he had been granted through the Queen's influence a pension of £1000 a year for life; and this money continued to be paid until 1646, when Percy fell into disgrace with his royal patroness. Northumberland also gave his heir a liberal allowance,¹ so that Sir Henry was enabled to cut a good figure abroad. When the Civil War broke out, he took ship for England, and succeeded in joining the King at Oxford early in December, 1642. As an officer of cavalry he showed both courage and skill and in 1643 Charles created him *Baron Percy of Alnwick*, advancing him at the same time to the rank of Master-General of Ordnance. For this important and difficult post he proved entirely unfitted. Even Stephen Fox² (who was his friend and deputy, and had been for years employed in the Northumberland household) admits with regret that Percy had no skill as an ordnance officer, and had, in truth, "contracted the ill-will of the King and the whole Court by his Neglect."³ Whether he resigned, or was removed from the Master-Generalship, we find him once more in command of cavalry at the beginning of 1644. Here he soon redeemed his character as a soldier. At the battle of Cropredy Bridge (June 29, 1644), when the Parliamentary troops were defeated, it was Percy who led the daring cavalry charge which practically decided the day. Even Clarendon (who was no friend to this or any other member of the House of Northumberland) admits that at Cropredy, and again at Lostwithiel and the second battle of Newbury, Lord Percy of Alnwick showed himself as splendid a general of cavalry as he had been a poor director of ordnance. Near Andover, however, he was surprised by the same Waller whom he had helped to rout at Cropredy, defeated by greatly

¹ *Syon Household Books*.

² Afterwards Sir Stephen Fox, ancestor of Charles James Fox, and of the Holland and Ilchester families.

³ *Memoirs of Sir Stephen Fox*.

superior numbers, wounded and taken prisoner. His exchange was not effected until Naseby had been fought and lost, and the war was practically at an end. According to De Fonblanque,¹ he did not leave England until after the death of the King. This, however, seems to be merely a conjecture, in support of which no authority of any kind is quoted. Indeed, a statement in the Clarendon Papers points rather to the conclusion that Lord Percy was actually in Paris or thereabouts during the winter of 1646-47. Hyde, writing from Paris to Secretary Nicholas under date of "February, 1646-47," states that "Lord Percy is hated by the Queen and Lord Jermyn."² The Queen was certainly in the French capital at that time, and Jermyn was the Royalist agent there. Had Percy been still lying *perdu* in England he could scarcely have given them active cause for this sudden change of feeling towards him. The chances are, that having joined the Queen's party on the Continent, he fell foul of Jermyn's plans, and was overruled by that nobleman (between whom and himself there existed an old rivalry, dating from the time of the Army Plot). If Jermyn had obtained an ascendancy over the Queen, it is easy to understand how the once-favoured Percy came to fall into disgrace. Of course the latter may have again visited England before the King's death; but if he did, it is strange that no mention of the fact is made by Clarendon or any other contemporary authority. Loss of the Queen's friendship (and perhaps also loss of his pension) must have soured him, for there is no mention of his having accompanied the Prince of Wales to Scotland and England during the ill-fated expedition of 1650-51. Soon after the Prince's return to France he sent for Percy, and, despite maternal objections, made him his Lord Chamberlain—a position the duties and salary of which were for the most part nominal.

Indeed Percy had now fallen upon evil days. The

¹ *Annals of the House of Percy.*

² *Clarendon State Papers.*

birth of a son and heir to the re-married Earl of Northumberland had shattered his hopes in that quarter ; while the Queen's enmity and the stoppage of his pension reduced him to practical poverty. Back to England he would not or could not go ; so there remained for him no other course but to share the wandering fortunes of his master, waiting patiently for that "good wind" that was yet "to blow the exiles home." But when the "good wind" came at last, there was, as we shall see, no Henry Percy to hoist before it his swelling sail.

The Earl of Northumberland's obstinate refusal to have aught to do with a Government guilty of the King's blood, or one founded upon unconstitutional methods, proved in the last degree exasperating to the "Rump" Parliament, and the voices of his enemies in that body grew louder and more persistent than ever. The abolition of the House of Lords proclaimed by the new Committee was aimed chiefly at the Earl and his immediate following. Early in March 1649 the arrest of his sister, Lady Carlisle, was ordered "on suspicion of treason." This still beautiful woman, whom the King's trial and death had converted from a Parliamentarian into a Royalist, was lodged in the Tower and threatened with a fate similar to that which had befallen Hamilton, Holland, and Capel. It was at first hoped that Northumberland's desire to save her from the block might bring him to terms with her gaolers ; but the Earl remained sternly aloof, probably realising that even the "Levellers" would hardly venture to behead a woman who had been the friend and counsellor of John Pym. Lady Carlisle was then brought before the Council and questioned with the utmost rigour, every endeavour being made to force from her a "confession" implicating Northumberland in one or other of the Royalist plots. She remained staunch—not only to her brother, but to those who had been really associated with her in intrigue. It is not known to what lengths her judges actually proceeded in

Northumberland defies the "Rump" and disowns Cromwell.

their ignoble efforts; but there is good reason for believing that she was threatened at the last with the torture of the rack.¹ Everything failed, however, to draw a word from her, and the baffled Council sent her to close imprisonment in the Tower, where she remained for three years.

Various attempts followed to injure Northumberland in his own person, or in the persons of his friends. One James Tempest of Leicester, a member of the "Rump," conspired with others to secure the sequestration of the Percy estates; and, with that end in view, made charges of treason against the Earl in the House of Commons. Northumberland's first intention was to treat these accusations with contempt; but his friends (including Leicester and Lord Lisle) having represented to him that he might be impeached and his lands confiscated should he fail to answer Tempest, he was induced to apply for an inquiry. After nearly a year's delay, a commission was appointed to investigate the matter, with the result that all Tempest's assertions were disproved. As in the previous case of Colonel Lloyd, however, the House refused to punish Tempest.² Another case of spite was the removal of the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Elizabeth from the kindly guardianship of the Earl's sister, Lady Leicester, and their imprisonment in Carisbrooke Castle. At this latter place the treatment accorded to the hapless children was so harsh that the young Princess pined and died within a few months after she had been taken from Penshurst.³ The dismantling of Wressill Castle as a fortress (which had been carried out with thoroughness by Cromwell's soldiers) was no longer sufficient in the eyes of the Council, who, simply from motives of revenge, now commanded that this historic pile should be destroyed even as a place of residence for the Earl and his heirs.

¹ See *State Papers*, May 5, 1649.

² *Commons' Journals*.

³ She died "of grief and suffering," September, 8, 1650, in her fifteenth year. The health of Gloucester was also shattered by this confinement, and he died before he was twenty.

The vandal manner in which the work of ruin was done has been already described. From being one of the finest houses in the North, Wressill became little more than a heap of ruins. So virulent, indeed, had the Earl's enemies in Parliament and Council become, that they permitted the Sheriff of Northumberland to make arbitrary seizure of a considerable portion of the Percy estates in that shire. There was neither rhyme nor reason for the seizure, and the Earl confidently demanded that the property should be restored. The sheriff, rendered bold by the support which he knew was behind him, refused either explanation or restitution; and when Northumberland laid his case before Parliament he could obtain no redress.¹ Indeed it was not until the Restoration that the Earl's turn came, and the rapacious sheriff and his associates were forced to disgorge.² Such were only a few of the many ways by which those in control of affairs sought to humiliate this great nobleman, and to bend him to their will. But their labour was all in vain; and in a little while Northumberland's worst enemies, the extremists and fanatics of the "Rump" and "Barebones" Parliaments, were themselves overthrown and set at naught by the general in whom they had trusted so blindly, that "foe of princes," Oliver Cromwell.

To our Earl, the new-made Lord Protector was no more acceptable than the old Parliament. Both, in his eyes, were equally guilty of "*the needless and unconstitutional slaying of his late Majesty*"; and if he had refused to belong to the one, he was now determined to accept no favours from the other. Cromwell, who appears to have admired his lofty character, offered him the foremost seat in his "House of Lords"; but the offer was at once refused, as was a similar one made by Richard Cromwell some years later.³

The Earl continued constant to his resolution, and occupied himself with family concerns and the manage-

¹ *Commons' Journals; Proceedings in Council.*

² See later.

³ *Dict. Nat. Biography*, under "Percy." *Clarendon State Papers*, ii. 432.

ment of his estates, during the nine years that intervened between the execution of Charles I. and the death of Cromwell.

In August 1659 died Northumberland's favourite sister, Dorothy, Countess of Leicester, a woman notable as much for the charm of her own nature as for the extraordinary genius and beauty of the children whom she brought into the world.¹ Northumberland felt her death keenly. They were nearly of an age, and had spent their early childhood together at Syon, during the dark days when their father stood in the very shadow of the scaffold. Earl Algernon had risked that father's displeasure in helping to bring about his sister's marriage, for her husband Leicester was then, and to the end continued, his warmest friend. Severe illness (for he was still, as in the days of his Lord-Generalship, subject to recurrent forms of malady) prevented him from making the long journey to attend his sister's obsequies; but he wrote to Leicester in the following terms:—

*"I account the Losse equall almost to any that could befall me, and it would be much increased if it should remove me further from your Lordship's kindnesse and Favour."*²

Leicester answered in language stilted perhaps, as was the custom of the time, but evidently heartfelt:—

"In the greatest Sorrowe that I ever suffered, your Lordship hath given me the greatest Consolation that I could receive from anybody in this World. For, having lost that which I loved best, your Lordship secureth me from losing that which I loveth next, that is your Favour; to which, having no Right or Claime by any Worthynes in myself, but only by that

¹ She was mother of Algernon Sidney; of the famous general, Lord Lisle; of Henry, Earl of Romney, perhaps the handsomest, certainly one of the most clear-sighted statesmen of his day; of Colonel Robert Sidney; of the fair and witty Lady Lucy Pelham (from whom sprang the parliamentary dynasty of the Pelhams); and of Dorothy, Countess of Sunderland, whom the world knows best as Edmund Waller's "peerless Sacharissa." From Lady Leicester descend many of the greatest houses in England.

² *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. 681.

Death of the
Earl's
brother and
sister. Occu-
pations of
retirement.

*Alliance of which my moste deare Wife was the Mediation, I might justly feare the Losse of that also, if your Lordship's Charity towards me did not prevent it."*¹

While the gentle Countess Dorothy was dying at Penshurst, another member of the family—her younger brother, Henry Percy—lay mortally ill overseas, at the Court of the exiled Prince of Wales. Sister and brother, indeed, passed away within a few weeks of each other; but how strange a contrast was presented in the manner of their dying! The last gaze of Lady Leicester rested upon the sorrowful faces of those she loved. Husband, tall sons, and comely daughters knelt weeping around her death-bed; and even her sister—the once gay woman of the world, saddened now and perhaps softened by long imprisonment—even Lucy of Carlisle was there to give her the kiss of parting. In the anterooms were friends a-many, who had come with heavy hearts to bid her farewell; the great hall of Penshurst was thronged with tenants and servants, mourning as if for one of their own kin; and without, under the ancient oaks were couriers by the score, waiting silently for the news which ere morning would sadden many a distant home. Thus died, as a good woman should die, Dorothy, Countess of Leicester.

Far otherwise the last hours of Henry, Lord Percy. In his life he had been loved by few; few came to bid him "go in peace" to the world beyond. The ruffling, out-at-elbows followers of the banished Prince were too busy with their dicing and wenching to care very much whether another of their number lived or died—except in so far as his departure meant some more crown-pieces to be shared among them. With but a younger brother's portion, he had never married; so there was no wife to weep for Harry Percy either at home or abroad. There may have been, perhaps—(is it wrong to hope that there was?)—some woman of another sort, with good-nature enough to smooth his death-bed pillow, and to leave his pockets unrifled till he died. No doubt the Prince of

¹ *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. 682.

Wales, politest of men, came at least once to visit this faithful servant ; but the life of even an exiled monarch is precious, and must not be exposed to the contagion of a sick-room. Besides, great things were brewing, or said to be brewing, in England ; and every moment which Charles could spare from his amusements was given to the serious business of political intrigue. It is hardly likely, therefore, that Percy saw much of his patron ; and when the great man comes seldom, the lesser ones follow his example. While Percy counted the dreary hours in his garret lodgings at Breda, the "flying Court," ever led on by new hopes, was now at Bruges, now at Antwerp, now at Flushing. So that the dying man was probably left in his loneliness to await the end. Even the exact date of his death is uncertain ; but we know that it occurred only a few weeks after that of Lady Leicester. The sister had been borne to her rest in state, her bier followed by hundreds who held her memory dear. The brother's remains, on the contrary, were laid with scant ceremony in what was then the English cemetery at Breda. Charles and his Court were, at the time, many leagues away, watching eagerly for news from England, but perhaps one or two old Cavalier comrades found time to act as mourners, when all that remained of Henry, Lord Percy of Alnwick, was left to mingle with foreign clay.

The death of Cromwell on September 3, 1658, was the signal for Northumberland's return to public life.

The Restoration : independent attitude of the Earl.
His death.

Richard Cromwell's succession to the vacant Protectorate inspired the Earl with gloomy forebodings. He knew the weak, irresolute character of the new Chief of State, and dreaded lest the warring ambitions of the military leaders (in whose hands the real power now lay) should plunge England into anarchy. Actuated, as he always was, by a strong sense of public duty, he at once left his retirement, and once more took up his residence in London, so as to be ready at any moment to exert himself in the cause of peace.

There is no doubt that he had already begun to look to a restoration of the monarchy as the best possible settlement of affairs. He was still the recognised leader of the Moderate Parliamentarians, a body which, as Hume points out, shared the Royalist detestation of the "Rump," and was now prepared to join issue with the supporters of the Prince of Wales in overthrowing that unconstitutional council. Accordingly Northumberland House became the scene of daily conferences, and the objective point of secret emissaries from overseas. The Earl exerted himself to the utmost to keep the eager spirits of the Cavalier party in subjection, rightly maintaining that, under the circumstances, caution and silent vigilance were the surest means to success. Richard Cromwell offered him a seat in the so-called "House of Lords," as Oliver had previously done; but Northumberland curtly declined the proffered distinction.¹ Shortly afterwards the second Protector had no longer power to bestow his doubtful honours, since by the dissolution of the Rump Parliament (April 22, 1659) he practically betrayed himself to the council of officers, and so brought about his own resignation. The stormy events of the six months which followed bound the Moderates and Royalists still more closely together. In spite of isolated instances, such as the rising of Booth in Cheshire, the latter party followed Northumberland's counsels and waited in patience through the reassembling of the Long Parliament, its expulsion by Lambert, and its second restoration and final dissolution at the instance of General Monk. From the time that Monk entered London at the head of his troops (February 3, 1660) Northumberland was in constant communication with him. Between the close of the Long and the opening of the New or Convention Parliament, "a council of state was established, consisting of men of character and moderation."² The Earl accepted the commission of Lord-Advocate, and urged his friends and adherents to acquiesce in the policy of Monk, however tortuous and

¹ Gardiner; *Commonwealth*.

² Hume.

uncertain it might appear to them at the time. The fact that Lord Southampton and he were known to be in negotiation regarding the proposed alliance between the young Lord Percy and Lady Audrey Wriothesley, afforded him an adequate excuse for remaining constantly at Northumberland House or Syon. On April 13, 1660, we find him writing to his brother-in-law :—

*"The Meeteing of my Lord of Southampton in Pursuance of some Overtures that have beene made for a Marriage betweene his Daughter and my Sonne,¹ was the principall Occasion that brought me to this Towne, where I find most People very busie, or, att least, seemeing so, and the Publick Affairs in a Posture that needes the Aduyce of better Heads than myne. All Persons here show strong Inclinations to bring in the King and re-establish the Government vpon the old Foundation. Some there are that would have him restored to all without any Condition, only an Acte of Obliuion and Generall Pardon to be graunted; but the soberer People will, I believe, expect Termes of more Securitie for themselues and Aduantage for the Nation; and unlesse a full Satisfaction is giuen in suche Pointes as shall be judged necessary to those Ends, it is thought that the Army will not be pleased."*²

The Earl's consistency will be recognised in this epistle. Anxious as he was to see the affairs of the country settled by the only available method—i.e. the re-establishment of the monarchy—he was resolved that the constitutional privileges for which the Long Parliament had struggled should not be swallowed up and lost in the new wave of loyalty.

When the Convention Parliament met on April 25th, Leicester, slower than his brother-in-law to accept Monk's guidance, had not yet put in an appearance at the town-house of the Sidneys in Swan Close.³ Accordingly

¹ Josceline, Lord Percy, the Earl's only son, was now sixteen years of age, having been born in 1644.

² *Sidney Papers*, ii. 685; Northumberland to the Earl of Leicester, April 13, 1660.

³ Leicester House was in Swan Close, Leicester Fields. Behind the mansion was the famous riding-school kept by Major Foubert, of which more under the account of the murder of Thomas Thynne (consort of Elizabeth Percy) in 1682.

Northumberland again appealed to him, urging his immediate presence in Parliament as "*both desired and expected by the Peers.*" "*Indeede,*" continued the letter, "*our House stands in great Neede of some wise Men to guide it.*"¹ The House of Lords, however, had but little to do with the events leading up to the Restoration. The elections had everywhere proved favourable to the King's party, and from the moment of the assembling of the new House of Commons, the recall of Charles II. was a foregone conclusion. Numerous meetings between Royalists and Presbyterians took place at Northumberland House; and, on May 8th, the Earl had the satisfaction of attending with the members of both Houses,² when the exiled sovereign was "proclaimed with great solemnity" in Palace Yard, at Whitehall, and at Temple Bar. His increasing infirmities prevented him from making one of the committee of Lords and Commons sent to invite Charles to take possession of the government, but he was one of the first to greet the King when he entered London on May 29th. It is clear from his letters at the time that he expected no preferment under the new rule; and he made ready to retire into the country as soon as his Majesty should be securely settled upon the throne. But Charles, mindful of the unvarying moderation of the Earl, and of the widespread influence which he exercised, was determined to retain him as a counsellor, and to overlook the fact that he had taken the Parliamentary side in the Civil War. Northumberland and Leicester were both called to the Privy Council. Writing under date of May 31, 1660, the latter nobleman says: "*A message came to my house, and warned me to come to Whitehall; the like he (Charles) did to the Earl of Northumberland. We went together, not knowing for what, and having stayed awhile in the King's Withdrawing*

¹ *Sidney Papers*, ii, 686.

² The peers, says Hume, "found the doors of their House open; and all were admitted; even such as had formerly been excluded on account of their pretended delinquency."

*Chamber, we were called into the Councell Chamber, and there, contrary to his or my expectation, we were sworn Privy Councillors."*¹ But Charles was disposed to be more generous still towards the Moderate Lords. Northumberland was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the counties of Northumberland and Sussex; and that portion of his possessions in the former county which had been illegally appropriated by the Cromwellian sheriff,² was at once restored to him, the arrogant official being condemned to make good all arrears of rent. Moreover, "as a mark of personal favour and frendship," the King granted to the Earl a commission to act as Lord High Constable of England at the forthcoming coronation. The tenure of this service was to last for three days only; but at the last moment Northumberland was compelled, on account of one of his recurrent attacks, to decline this honour. Curiously enough, Pepys, in his Diary, mentions having seen the Royal Champion³ introduced into the banqueting-hall at Westminster by the Earl of Northumberland in his capacity of High Constable, at the coronation of Charles. This is certainly an error, as there still exists a royal sign-manual dated April 5, 1661, exempting the Earl from attendance at the ceremony "on account of his infirmities."⁴

Naturally the extreme Republicans were loud in their condemnation of Northumberland for thus, as they put it, "surrendering his principles." The truth of the matter seems to have been that while the Earl accepted at the King's hands such dignities as he deemed proper, and even necessary to his hereditary rank and position as a great landowner, he never assumed any office, or advocated any measure inconsistent with his lifelong advocacy of constitutional government. Forster, in his *Arrest of the Five Members*, lays stress upon this fact: "As a contrast (to

¹ *Sidney Papers*, i. 135.

² *Vide ante*, p. 287.

³ Sir Edward Dymoke, Knight, of Scrivelsby, Lincs., ancestor of the present Champion Royal, officiated in this capacity at the coronation of Charles II.

⁴ The document is preserved at Alnwick.

the new-born loyalty of some ex-Parliamentarians) let me mention in justice to the Earl of Northumberland. . . . that when, upon the Restoration, he consented like Lenthall to receive favours from the Government, it was by no such base betrayal of acts and proceedings in which he himself had been a participator." Leicester was similarly blamed, and with equal injustice, for his acquiescence in the new order of things. Both Earls, indeed, adopted an independent tone which could not but be distasteful to the King's Cavalier friends. The rush for gifts and preferment vastly disgusted them; and Northumberland wrote to his brother-in-law: "*If all that pretend to Favors or Aduantages from the Court should be successfull in their Designes the King would soon be made poore, and the Kingdom be much burthened.*"¹ He was vigorously opposed to the punishment of the regicides, and held that the general pardon and indemnity should be made to extend even to them. Speaking in the Convention Parliament, he boldly declared that "although he had taken no part in the death of the King, he was against questioning those that had been concerned in that affair; *that the example might be more useful to posterity and profitable to future Kings*, by delivering them from the like exorbitances."² This speech was held to be a direct menace to the King; but Charles and his ministers discreetly ignored it, nor was Northumberland's influence at Court apparently affected by the attitude which he had adopted. A few months later he once more raised his voice in protest against the shameful exhumation of Cromwell's remains, and the barbarous revenge wrought upon the defenceless corpse of that great statesman, by those that had feared and fled from him in his lifetime. To wreak indignities upon a dead enemy, he declared, was the act of a coward, and could not fail to excite a feeling of sympathy in every generous breast for the late Protector and the other Parliamentarians whose graves were thus

¹ *Sidney Papers*; Northumberland to Leicester, December 8, 1660.

² Ludlow's *Memoirs*, iii. 10.

desecrated.¹ So repugnant to his feelings was the foul scene at Tyburn, that he withdrew almost entirely from Court, nor did he attend Parliament again save on rare occasions.² His brief reappearance upon the stage of public affairs was followed by a return to the quiet pursuits with which he had occupied himself during the Protectorate. The improvement of the gardens at Syon and Northumberland House proved a congenial occupation (for he had inherited much of his father's love for horticulture), and he added largely to the collection of pictures at his town residence by purchasing works of art scattered during the Revolution.³ At the outbreak of the Great Plague, Charles held a council at Syon, and Evelyn had an opportunity of inspecting the improvements at that place. "And so to Syon," writes the diarist, "where his Majesty sat at Council during the Contagion. When business was over, I viewed that Seat belonging to the Earl of Northumberland, builte out of an old Nunnerie of stone, and faire enough ; but more celebrated for the garden than it deserves ; yet there is excellent wall fruit, and a pretty fountaine ; yet nothing extraordinarie."⁴ In the Earl's last recorded letter to Leicester he speaks lovingly of these gardens, and regrets the lack of melon seeds, "*being disappointed of some that were promised me from Tours, and Languedoc, which are much better than those we get from Paris.*"⁵ He also went in for horse-breeding upon an extensive scale at Petworth ; and, like Charles himself, imported Arabians, his agent abroad being his nephew Algernon Sidney, who had refused to accept public employment after the Restoration. Numerous warrants are to be found among the State Papers of the time authorising

¹ The bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, Bradshaw, and Pride were disinterred, hanged on the gallows at Tyburn, then decapitated, and the heads fixed on Westminster Hall.

² *Sidney Papers* ; Northumberland to Leicester, Dec. 8, 1660.

³ See *Evelyn's Diary* (ed. Bray), i. 313.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 379.

⁵ *Sidney Papers* ; Northumberland to Leicester, Feb. 25, 1662. Other letters were probably exchanged between the two Earls, as Leicester did not die until 1677.

the Earl to import barbs free of duty. He was an exceptionally fine horseman until age and increasing weakness obliged him to forego the saddle.

Another pleasing task to which he devoted himself was the education of his only son, Josceline, Lord Percy. Evelyn, while satirising the class of ignorant parasites usually sent abroad as "tutors" to young noblemen, or kept to flatter them into a so-called "education" at home, accords high praise to Northumberland for taking Lord Percy's training almost entirely into his own hands, and choosing for him only masters of proved ability.¹ The Earl's hopes of a union between his heir and the eldest daughter of Southampton (now Lord Treasurer) were disappointed by the premature death of Lady Audrey Wriothesley in the winter of 1660; and in a letter to Leicester he expresses himself as much distressed by this event,² for although the Cavalier Southampton and he differed widely in political views, they had always been warm friends in private. So anxious indeed was the Earl to secure one of the "loyal Wriothesleys" as a wife for Lord Percy, that in the following year he made overtures for the hand of Lady Elizabeth, sister of the deceased, and succeeded in bringing about the match—the bridegroom being only seventeen years of age, while the bride was considerably younger. The wedding festivities, which were unusually splendid (the King and most of the Court attending), took place in old Southampton House,³ Holborn.

Northumberland's life was now rapidly approaching its close. Between 1660 and 1668 the Archbishop of Canterbury issued in his favour repeated licenses for the eating of flesh meat "on fast days" and "in Lent," such nourishment being held necessary to his health.⁴ The fact that he applied for these licenses shows that the Earl had remained an upholder of prelacy and of the Anglican

¹ *Diary* (ed. Bray), ii. 125.

² *Sidney Papers*, ii. 700.

³ Afterwards Southampton Buildings. Part of the old mansion became the King's Head Tavern.—*Pennant*.

⁴ These licenses are preserved in the *Alnwick MSS.*

Church although some writers would have us regard him as a presbyterian, and he is so styled by most historians. In 1668, on the birth of his grandson, Henry Percy,¹ he made a new will; and a few weeks afterwards, on October 13 (his birthday), he died at Syon, aged sixty-six years. The body was carried to Petworth, and there laid beside that of his first wife, Ann Cecil. His second wife, Elizabeth Howard, survived him many years, and as the guardian of her granddaughter, the Duchess of Somerset, eventual heiress of the Northumberland estates, displayed more pride than principle. As to the character of the tenth Earl, much has already been said in the course of this narrative. Among friends and enemies alike his name was respected. His chief fault, a certain proud reserve, had its origin rather in the early humiliations to which he had been subjected, and the cruel injustice of his father's imprisonment, than in any natural vainglory or coldness of heart. He had, it is true, few close friends; but these were deeply and sincerely attached to him. High abilities he undoubtedly possessed, but they were of the speculative rather than of the practical nature; although his various essays in statesmanship were marked by sound sense and foresight. As the first to attempt the reform of the English navy, and to indicate the means thereto, he deserves much credit which is usually bestowed elsewhere; and whatever be the opinion as to his political views, there can be no doubt that he acted up to them with absolute sincerity and disinterestedness.

Only three of the tenth Earl's children—two daughters and one son—arrived at years of maturity. With the son we shall deal presently. Of the daughters, the elder, Lady Ann Percy, married Philip, Lord Stanhope; while the younger, Lady Elizabeth, became the wife of Arthur, Lord Capel, afterwards created Earl of Essex. The Stanhope alliance was an interesting one for many reasons, and deserves more than passing

The children
of the tenth
Earl

¹ This child died at the age of eight months.

notice. Philip Stanhope (afterwards second Earl of Chesterfield) was a young man of great intelligence, but unfortunately of a profligate nature. His fame has been overshadowed by that of his son, Philip Dormer, third Earl of Chesterfield; but he, like the latter, has left published correspondence¹ in which the students of the period may find much to occupy their attention. He was married to Lady Ann Percy in 1650, being then barely seventeen; and having quarrelled with his grandfather (the first Earl of Chesterfield), was fain to take refuge with his wife at Petworth, where he resided for several years. As the fate of the Northumberland succession hung at this time upon one precarious life (that of Josceline, Lord Percy, a delicate child), Stanhope's father-in-law regarded the young couple as next in line, and executed in their favour a will, which was afterwards set aside on the birth of the infant Henry Percy in 1668. Lady Stanhope was of a mystical nature, and succeeded in imbuing her husband with some of her own belief in omens, apparitions, and the like; and this gave rise to two curious incidents mentioned in his "Letters." He was in London, he tells us, on some legal business, when, at eight o'clock in the morning, as he was about to rise, he "plainly saw, within a yard of my bedside, a thing all in white like a standing sheet, with a knot at the top of it, about four or five feet high, which I considered a good while, and did raise myself up in my bed to view it the better. At last I thrust out both my hands to catch hold of it, but in a moment, like a shadow, it slid to the foot of the bed, out of the which I leaping could see it no more." Although he protests that he had "little belief in things of this nature," it immediately occurred to him that the vision portended evil to his wife. Ordering horses, he rode at once to Petworth, leaving his law affairs unfinished. On his arrival he met one of Northumberland's running footmen, who told him that he was coming to him with a packet of letters. These he took, and then went to his wife's

¹ *Letters of Philip, Second Earl of Chesterfield* (London, 1729).

apartments, where he found her with her sister, Elizabeth, and another lady, in good health. They asked him why he had returned so quickly; upon which he mentioned what had happened to him that morning. His wife uttered a cry of astonishment, and bade him open one of the letters which he had taken from the footman. "This," he continues, in his account of the affair, "I immediately did, and read my wife's letter to me aloud, wherein she desired my speedy return, as fearing that some ill would happen to me, because that morning she had seen a thing all in white with a black face, standing by her bedside, which had frightened her so much as to make her scribe (*sic*) out so loud that her weemen came running into the room." The strange coincidence naturally amazed Stanhope; "for by examining all particulars we found that the same day, the same hour, and (as near as could be computed) the same minute, all that had happened to me had befallen her, being forty miles asunder. The Lady Essex and Mrs. Ramsay were witnesses to both our relations, and acquainted the Lord of Northumberland with it, who thought it a very extraordinary thing."¹

The second occurrence of a supernatural character was in 1653, and is thus described by Lord Stanhope: "Being at Tunbridge, a thing of almost as odd a nature as the former befell me; for being abroad one afternoon with a setting dog in a very bright day, with a gentleman named Mr. Pirs, and five or six other horsemen, as we were beating a great stubble field that was above a mile about, and the which had no bushes or trees in it, but only a little hedge in the middle of it, which was not above ten or twelve yards long, on a sudden we all heard a terrible groan, and after that another much louder, and so a third, which made us all to conclude that somebody was a-dying near that little hedge, from whence the noise seemed to come, which was within forty yards of us. And thereupon we all went towards the hedge; but, when we came almost to it, all our horses began to start, and fell a-plunging, and

¹ *Letters of Second Earl of Chesterfield.*

did run a good way with us before we could stop them; and afterwards when we tried to make them go near the hedge, we found it impossible; wherefore, Mr. Pirs and I alighting, went round the hedge and viewed every place about it, without finding or seeing anything that could make that noise. But as soon as a servant of mine heard the groans, he cried out, 'God bless my lady,' who was then big with child, and died three months after of the small-pox; giving just three such groans when she died; insomuch that I, being in another room and hearing her, said I was sure she was a-dying, for that those were the same dismal groans we heard at Tunbridge. She lived eight days after her being brought to bed of a son, who only survived his mother three weeks."¹

This was the only child of the union. After Lady Stanhope's death, her husband betook himself once more to the roving, reckless life which he had followed before his marriage. He went abroad, was captured by Majorcan pirates in the Mediterranean, almost drowned in the Tiber, and threatened with imprisonment for debt at Rome. While endeavouring to make his way back on foot to England, he fell ill of a violent fever near Lyons, and having spent all his money, was forced to beg from door to door. At last a good Samaritan, in the person of a travelling Jesuit, found him on the roadside, gave him food and drink, and paid for his journey to Paris. At Paris good news awaited him. His grandfather was dead, and he had inherited the estates and title of Chesterfield. His first letter, "on returning to civilisation," was addressed to his wife's sister, Lady Capel, for whom he had the greatest regard, and to whom he sent a "necklace of pearl worth sixteen hundred pounds." Lady Capel, afterwards Countess of Essex, appears to have been the only person who exercised any controlling influence over this headstrong young man. She was, writes Evelyn, "a wise, yet somewhat melancholy woman,"² and on more than one occasion we find her remonstrating with her

¹ *Letters of Second Earl of Chesterfield.*

² *Diary.*

brother-in-law upon the career of debauchery which he pursued after his return to England.¹ His name became intimately connected with that of Barbara Villiers (better known by her later title of Duchess of Cleveland),² as well as with those of Lady Anne Hamilton and Lady Elizabeth Howard. Thanks to the kind offices of his sister-in-law, he was at length induced to marry Lady Elizabeth Butler, one of the daughters of the Duke of Ormonde ; but this second matrimonial venture ended tragically, and Chesterfield is even accused of having murdered Countess Elizabeth by means of poisoned sacrificial wine, which he compelled her to take in proof of her innocence of an intrigue with the Duke of York.³ In 1669 Lord Chesterfield married, for the third time, Lady Elizabeth Dormer,⁴ by whom he had, with other children, his successor, the third Earl (Philip Dormer Stanhope), whose "Letters" have won for him a meretricious fame, and who inherited not a few of his father's baser characteristics.

The second daughter of Northumberland was Lady Elizabeth Percy, already alluded to, who on May 19, 1653, married Arthur, second Lord Capel, son of that Lord Capel who had been beheaded in Old Palace Yard on March 9, 1648-9, for his exertions in the Cavalier cause. The Capels were by no means an old or a very noble family, descending as they did from William Capel, an honest draper, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1503. Lady Elizabeth Percy's husband inherited through his mother the fine estate of Cashiobury Park in Hertfordshire. In 1661 he was elevated to the Viscountcy of Malden and Earldom of Essex ; and from 1672 to 1677 he served as Viceroy of Ireland, in which capacity he somewhat disappointed the Protestant party by what was termed

¹ *Letters of Second Earl of Chesterfield.*

² He left a natural daughter by this woman.

³ Jesse's *Courts of the Stuarts*, vol. iv. p. 205. There seems no proof that Elizabeth Butler had yielded to the Duke of York's advances ; and Pepys, for one, absolves her from all guilt.

⁴ Daughter of the Earl of Carnarvon.

his "undue lenity" towards the Papists. As a result, he was recalled in favour of the more compliant Ormonde. After the fall of Danby, two years later, Essex was made treasurer in his room, and, with Shaftesbury, Sunderland, Halifax, and Sir William Temple, directed for a time the government of the nation. Following the dangerous lead of Shaftesbury, he became one of the bitterest opponents of the Court, and of the Duke of York's succession, taking part with Monmouth, Lord William Russell, and his kinsman Algernon Sidney, in the Rye House or "Fanatical" Plot. In the councils of the conspirators, Essex and Sidney favoured the establishment of a commonwealth. After the betrayal of the plot both were promptly arrested, together with Russell and others of the malcontents. On the same day that Russell was convicted of high treason (July 13, 1683), Lord Essex, dreading a like fate, put an end to his existence in one of the cells of the Tower.¹ As Pennant points out,² he had publicly upheld the morality of suicide, and he was known to be subject to fits of deep melancholy;³ yet there were not wanting those of the extreme anti-Papist party who claimed that his death was due to the King and the Duke of York, "who happened that morning to pay a visit to the Tower."⁴ The evidence laid before the coroner's jury contained no suspicious facts such as were connected with the murder or suicide of Henry Percy, eighth Earl of Northumberland, a century before; and a verdict of *felo de se* was returned.⁵

Elizabeth, Lady Essex, survived her husband nearly thirty-four years, dying on February 5, 1717. Their only daughter, Ann Capel, married Charles, second Earl of Carlisle; while their son, Algernon, second Earl of Essex (born December 28, 1670) afterwards became Constable of the Tower wherein his ill-fated father had breathed his last.⁶

¹ He cut his throat with a razor.

² *London*, p. 292, 293.

³ Hume; *History of England*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Pennant's *London*.

⁶ The present Earl of Essex is a descendant of Elizabeth Percy and Arthur Capel, first Earl.

V

JOSCELINE PERCY, who succeeded as eleventh Earl of Northumberland, was now in his twenty-fifth year ; and of constitution so frail that the quidnuncs had already begun to speculate upon the probable extinction of the direct male line of Louvain. The young Earl's prevailing ill-health debarred him from taking any save a nominal part in public life, while at the same time it kept him uninfected by the moral leprosy of court life under the second Charles. Any excess must indeed have proved fatal to this "thin-spun life," and the old Earl acted with his usual common-sense in choosing as his son's tutor one who was not only a ripe scholar but also a physician of skill. This person was Dr. John Mapletoft, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and M.D. of the same university. Mapletoft subsequently took holy orders, and died vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry, November 10, 1721, in his ninety-first year.¹ Thanks to the vigilance of Mapletoft, Lord Percy was delivered from the regimen of quackery and old wives' nostrums to which his mother, Lady Northumberland, had subjected him ; and under his new mentor's care the young man made rapid strides towards health and strength. Mapletoft had no love for the Countess ; nor did that descendant of the house of Suffolk look with favour upon the Cambridge doctor. Earl

The eleventh Earl: early life and marriage.

¹ John Mapletoft, b. 1631, of a good family in Northamptonshire, left Cambridge to undertake the education of Josceline Percy. In later years he practised with great success as a physician in London. Being offered the living of Braybrooke in Northants, he took orders 1682, and became D.D. of Cambridge in 1689-90. Subsequently he was transferred to the vicariate of St. Lawrence Jewry, where he continued to preach until over eighty. He died, full of years and honours, at Westminster, on the date given above. To the last, he appears to have practised medicine.

Algernon, however, saw the beneficial effects of Mapletoft's training, and imperious as Lady Northumberland was by nature, she did not dare to cross her husband's will. Josceline was sent abroad with his tutor, and spent many happy months in travel. At Rome he was much courted by the English Catholics, who hoped, as in the case of the Duke of York, to bring him to their way of thinking, especially as his father was known to hold views widely opposed to Puritanism. For Rome itself young Percy acquired an extraordinary affection, and it was while hastening over-eagerly to return to the Eternal City that he subsequently met his death at Turin. From the allurements, religious and otherwise, of the Papal States Mapletoft prudently withdrew his pupil, and the remainder of their sojourn on the Continent was spent at Paris and the Hague.

Percy, on his return to England, surprised his friends by the great improvement which had taken place in his health and intellect. The exacting Evelyn found the young heir of Northumberland entirely to his taste, and held him up as an example to his order. "It is not enough," wrote the diarist, "that persons of my Lord Percy's quality be taught to dance and to ride ; to speak languages and weare his cloathes with a good grace¹ (which are the verie shells of travail) ; but besides all these that he know men, customs, courts, and disciplines, and whatsoever superior excellencies the places afford, befitting a person of birth and noble impressions. This is the fruite of travail ; thus our incomparable Sidney was bred, and this, *tamquam Minerva Philidiæ*, sets the crown upon his perfections. . . . Unless we thus cultivate our Youth, and noblemen make wiser provisions for their educations abroad above the vanity of Talk, Feather, and Ribbon. . .

¹ The mode of educating a young nobleman had changed indeed since the days when Percy's ancestor, Hotspur, had been trained

"To dance and singe, and speak of gentillesse,"

to manage his war-horse, and look askance at letters. But then, the Percy blood had changed also.

I despayre of ever seeing a man truly noble indeede. He may be called 'My Lord,'—titles and sounds are inferior trifles; but when virtue and blood are coincidents, they both add lustre and mutual excellencies: this is what my Lord (Northumberland) takes care to secure to his son, and which I foresee and augur of my noble Lord Percy."¹

Northumberland now believed that his heir might safely make his entry into public life. Early in 1660, Josceline was appointed colonel of the Westminster Regiment of Militia. "The young Lord," wrote Henry Champion, the Earl's agent at Syon, "has now his Commission of the Westminster Regiment, notwithstanding he refused to take the Engagement alias Declaration, because the war was begun before his time; which reason was allowed by the Council, and so granted him his Commission."² Eighteen months later Percy was associated with his father in the Lord-Lieutenancy of Northumberland. Meanwhile Dr. Mapleton, deeming his task at an end, took leave of the Percy family and returned to the Continent, where he spent two years studying medicine at Paris. Master and pupil parted with the warmest expressions of mutual regret; and the correspondence which was kept up between them from 1660 to 1663 shows clearly enough the esteem which Percy felt for the absent scholar. Northumberland had, as we have seen, chosen the beautiful Audrey Wriothesley as a fitting mate for his son, and the sudden death of this lady was a grave disappointment to the Earl. "The death of my Lady Audrey," he wrote to his brother-in-law, "did as nearly touch me as most accidents that could have happened; not for the Conveniency of her Fortune, nor the hopes of her bringing an Heir unto my family, as soon as it had been fit for her and my Son to have come together; but because I judged her to be of a Nature, Temper, and Humour likely to have made him an excellent wife, which would have brought me much Com-

¹ Evelyn to Edward Thurland, Nov. 1658, *Diary* (ed. Bray), vol. ii. 125.

² Champion to Hugh Potter, April 28, 1660; *Alnwick MSS.* Of Champion we shall hear more in connection with James Percy, the Claimant.

fort in the latter Part of my Life ; but since our uncertain Condition exposes us daily to these Troubles, I shall endeavour with all Patience to submit to them."¹ The Earl's motives in selecting a consort for his heir were certainly more commendable than those which afterwards guided his widow in her selfish matchmaking schemes for Lady Elizabeth Percy. A year later we find him again in treaty with Lord Southampton—on this occasion for the hand of Lady Audrey's younger sister, Elizabeth Wriothesley. This match came to fruition, but not before Lord Percy had been attacked by a violent illness, which postponed for a time his marital happiness, while it gave him an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the good qualities of his future wife. Early in December 1662 he wrote to Dr. Mapletoft from Petworth in the following terms :—

"I met with your letter of 7th October att London, comming with an intention only to have stayed there three or four days to make my Lady Betty a visit, but the night on which I came to toun I went to bed not well, and the next day fell into a very high feaver, which afterwards proved to be the Scarlet feaver. My mother had not the patience to be absent from me when I was soe ill, but came from Petworth and stayed with me till she saw me out of danger, and then returned again, leaving me to gett up and recover strength, which I did in fourteen hours ; so that, I thank God, I am now well at Petworth again.

"We are going within two days to London to stay there all this winter, and before Christmass to make an end of that work in which I assure myself that I have very heartily your good wishes and prayer for a good successe, which indeed I have no reason to doubt of ; for my mistress hath in both my sicknesses, and upon all other occasions, showed herself (not complimentally as a courtesy, but friendly and sincerely, and as far as was fitting and decent for her) soe kindly concerned for me, that I cannot but be extreemly sensible of it.

¹ Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 2nd Nov. 1660 ; *Sidney Papers*, ii. 700.

"After that you have wearied yourself, and seen all that you desire to see abroad, you may assure yourself that you will be very welcome to us att Petworth, where, if you return the next summer, you will find my wife and me, an old married couple, that doe extreamly desire to see you, though not sooner than it stands with your conveniences.

"I am and will ever be,

"Your affectionate and loving friend,

"J. PERCY."¹

The pleasant "work" alluded to—*i.e.* the writer's marriage—was duly "made an end of" at Southampton House on December 23, 1662—the bridegroom being then in his nineteenth year, and the bride at least two years younger. Lady Betty Wriothsley was "the comeliest maid wedded in the year," according to Sir Orlando Gee; although he, as Northumberland's principal man of business, may have been prejudiced in her favour. Fair she undoubtedly was, with a healthful, girlish beauty which contrasted agreeably enough with the rather delicate good looks of Josceline Percy. Soon after the wedding, the invaluable Pepys (who had a shrewd eye for feminine loveliness) caught a glimpse of her at Southampton House, and thus records his impressions: "To my Lord Treasurer's; there I saw my Lady Northumberland, and her daughter-in-law, my Lady Percy—a beautiful lady indeed!"² A little later we shall find her appearance very unfavourably criticised by certain of her own sex; but the consensus of masculine opinion was all on the side of Pepys, and the gallants of London, from the King downwards, hailed her as a beauty. To her husband she brought the double inheritance of a great fortune and an honoured name. She was the youngest daughter and co-heir of Thomas Wriothsley, fourth Earl of Southampton (the fellow-exile of Charles II., and his first Lord Treasurer), by his second wife, the daughter and co-heir of Francis, Earl of Chichester.

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

² *Diary*, vol. ii. p. 34.

Her half-sister was the famous Lady Rachel Russell, wife of the Lord Russell who suffered for his share in the "Fanatical" Plot. In addition to the property settled upon her by her father, Lady Percy succeeded to nearly £6000 per annum, left by her uncle, the Earl of Chester.

Such were the pleasant auspices under which Josceline Percy married. The honeymoon was spent at Titchfield in Hampshire,¹ after which the young couple betook themselves to Northumberland House; from which latter place Percy wrote on February 5, 1663, in answer to a congratulatory note from his old tutor Mapletoft (whose medical studies abroad were now finished, and who meditated practising in London under the powerful protection of the Percies and Wriothsesleys):—

"Φίλιτατος κῆς,

"I cannot but extreemly much accuse myself of not giving you the satisfaction of hearing from me soe often as you desire, for since the 23rd of December, which was the day that I was married, I have writ but once.

"I thank you for the little Greek note you sent me, and I desire you would, both by letters now, and by word of mouth when I see you, continue to use that freedom which hath been between us, for I heare so little of truth from anybody, that I am the last man that learns of anything amiss concerning myself; and therefore I desire you not to stick to write anything of admonition to me which will be, as your discourses have always been, to my advantage."²

On the death of his father-in-law, the "Cavalier Earl" of Southampton, in 1667, Lord Percy was nominated in his room Lord-Lieutenant of Southamptonshire, and about the same time his father had surrendered to him the practically hereditary post of Constable and Keeper

¹ The estate of Titchfield belonged to Lord Southampton, and passed after his death to another of his daughters, Lady Noël.

² *Ainwick MSS.*

of Tynemouth Castle.¹ When more than three years passed, however, without any sign of offspring to the young couple, the Earl of Northumberland became very fearful as to the succession. The next male heir of the House of Percy was probably unknown, although James Percy of Dublin subsequently claimed that he had been recognised by Earl Algernon as such. James Percy's pretensions were certainly known to the latter, who realised that, in case of failure of issue to his son, a contest must ensue between the ambitious Dublin trunk-maker and the heirs in the female line. The Earl's elder daughter, Lady Chesterfield, had died childless; his other daughter, the wife of Essex, had at the time no surviving issue;² and the heirs general appeared to be the descendants of Northumberland's sister, the Countess of Leicester. Under the circumstances, the Earl's anxiety as to the non-appearance of children in Lord Percy's household was not astonishing. At last, in 1666, after a very great pother, a daughter was born. Northumberland made no disguise of his disappointment, and sent a letter of "very grudging congratulation."³ Another daughter followed in 1667; and it was not until 1668 that a son and heir came to gladden the old Earl's last hours with illusory happiness.

The death of the tenth Earl brought to his successor innumerable letters of condolence.⁴ The grave Sir William Temple, with whom Earl Algernon had much
A brief, ill-fated reign. in common, sent a long and carefully worded epistle, replete with stilted platitudes upon the loss which the nation had sustained, and concluding with much sage advice as to the new Earl's conduct in public life. From Dr. Mapletoft there was a kindly little note, which

¹ This office passed, after the eleventh Earl's decease, to Mr. Edward Villiers.—*State Papers (Domestic)*, Charles II., Addenda.

² Algernon Capel, Essex's eventual heir, was not born until 1670, seventeen years after the marriage of his mother and father.

³ De Fonblanque, vol. ii.

These letters are preserved in the *Alnwick MSS.*

encouraged while it sympathised. But perhaps the most interesting of these communications, in regard to the source from which it emanated, was one from James, Duke of York. The old Earl had never forgiven James for the manner in which he had broken his *parole* and escaped from the friendly custody of St. James's Palace some years before.¹ The Duke, on the contrary, entertained for his former guardian a regard as warm as his cold nature could experience, and had never missed an opportunity of thanking Earl Algernon for the consideration shown to himself, his brother, and his sister, the Princess Elizabeth, during that period of storm and stress. There are numerous examples of former letters from York to Northumberland, and of the latter's replies, worded with a curt dignity which showed that, whatever might be his respect for the heir to the throne, the old sore still rankled. On the present occasion, the Duke wrote from the same palace of St. James, whence, with Colonel Bamford's assistance, he had broken bounds so shamefully. The letter is as follows :—

“ ST. JAMES, *October 1668.*

“ MY LORD OF NORTHUMBERLAND,—It will not be necessary for me to use many words to persuade you how sensibly I am touched with the loss you have made of your father, since you know so well the kindness that I have for your whole family. And as I have received many civilities and obligations from him, ever since I first knew him, so I do assure you, you shall find the continuance of my kindness to you upon all occasions ; and as I lost in him a very good friend, so I hope I shall find you as much so as he was, since you will always find me,

“ Your most affectionate friend,

“ JAMES.”²

Immediately after his succession, the new Earl was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland and Sussex ; but his health, which had improved under the loving care

¹ See *ante*, p. 274.

² *Atwick MSS.*

of Mapletoft, grew steadily worse from the day of his marriage; and a double sorrow which befell him in the winter of 1669-70 served to fill his own mind and that of his young wife with dread forebodings. The little Lord Percy, whose coming into the world had seemed so propitious, and upon whose future such high hopes had been built, inherited after all, not the honours and estates of the Percies, but only that physical weakness which had marred the lives of the two last Earls of the race.¹ A few months after his birth, and splendid baptism, the child died from sheer poverty of blood; the weak, flickering light was quenched, and with it expired the direct male line of the House of Percy. Only a few weeks later, and the Earl and Countess of Northumberland lost their elder daughter.² One child alone remained to them—Elizabeth Percy, afterwards heiress of her name.

The deaths of his children inspired Earl Josceline with a desire for foreign travel. This is usually ascribed by his biographers merely to reasons of health; and it is likely that Dr. Mapletoft counselled, and the Earl himself believed in the efficacy of change of scene, as a cure which he had tried with success on a former occasion. But various circumstances surrounding Northumberland's sudden departure from England, and in particular a certain letter preserved in the Domestic State Papers, make it more than probable that he was guided in this step by motives which his family have sought to suppress, or at least ignore. There is, in fact, good reason for believing that the Earl left England with a half-formed resolution of embracing the Roman Catholic religion, from which his grandfather had disassociated himself; and that, after a brief stay in Paris, he actually set out for the Papal See, in the firm intention of renouncing his Anglican tenets at the feet of Clement X. That he should do so is by no means surprising. During

¹ A heritage, it is suggested, of the riotous life lived by the "Magnificent Earl," far back in the wanton days of Henry VIII. The Percy stock, transplanted from the Border to the life of courts and cities, never thrived physically.

² Lady Henrietta Percy died early in 1670.

his former visit to Rome he had been so greatly impressed that Dr. Mapletoft deemed it wise to remove him without delay from the sphere of Papist influence. Circiniani's picture of his relative, the seventh Earl of Northumberland, on the walls of the English Church of the Trinity,¹ had reminded him of how recently and how grievously his predecessors had suffered for the Roman Creed; and, needless to say, the dignitaries of the Holy See, from the Pope and Cardinal Paluzzi down, spared no pains to win over so influential a convert. Many trials had of late afflicted him; and he may have hoped to find consolation under the wing of the ancient Church. Among his English friends, several in the very highest places had recently abandoned Anglicanism. The Duke of York was a Romanist; and at the very time that Northumberland set out on his pilgrimage, the King himself was in treaty with France as to the terms which would induce him to make open profession of the same religion.² Mapletoft's duties prevented him from attending his patron, and no less a personage than the philosopher, John Locke, was engaged to act as the Earl's physician and principal secretary on the Continent. Locke, when he undertook the office in question, knew nothing of Northumberland's religious views; and the fact that he did not accompany his employer to Italy, but "came back to England sooner than was at first designed,"³ possibly indicated his disapproval of the meditated change of faith. About the middle of April 1670, the Earl left Paris "*en route* for Rome," his wife (who was once more pregnant) remaining in the care of friends at the former city. On April 23 Charles Perrott

¹ This picture of "The Blessed Thomas Percy," as the eighth Earl is called by Catholics, was an object of pilgrimage to Englishmen of that faith.

² The treaty of Dover, by which Charles pledged himself to become a Roman Catholic, was signed at Dover on May 22, 1670. Both Clifford (himself a Catholic) and Arlington were privy to this agreement and to the negotiations which led up to it.—*Hume*.

³ *Life and Writings of John Locke*, i. xxiii. Locke's recognised patron was Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury), who gave his consent to the philosopher's engagement.

wrote in the following terms to Williamson (then in Paris), who had duly communicated the secret of Northumberland's mission to the Government :—

" *Whitehall*.—The packets having come in so late, I had much difficulty in making extracts for Lords Berkeley and Arlington. . . . I have taken a copy of the account of Lord Northumberland's business in Rome ; and intend showing it to my Lord (Arlington) to-morrow. *I believe Lord Northumberland's relatives would rather that it went no further.*"¹

What was the Earl's mysterious "*business in Rome*," the news of which his relatives were so anxious to conceal from the public?² The circumstances surely seem to point to a threatened avowal on his part of the papal supremacy. The hint conveyed by Perrott was apparently taken ; and, fate tragically conspiring with the relatives to keep the matter secret, it so remained until the publication of the tell-tale State Paper. De Fonblanque, in his authorised "*Annals of the House of Percy*," makes no mention of the Earl's true object in visiting Rome. Perhaps he was not aware of the letter quoted above ; perhaps he chose to overlook it, out of deference to the Earl's descendants. The accounts, which have been allowed to escape, of the journey to Italy and of the untimely death of Northumberland, are meagre in the extreme ; and it is even uncertain in what religion the noble pilgrim passed away.

For death overtook Josceline Percy in the flower of his youth, while less than a third of the road to Rome remained for him to traverse. The generally accepted statement, published by Collins, is that the Earl, in his eagerness to reach the Holy City, "overheated himself with travelling post for many days," and, on his arrival

¹ *Domestic State Papers, Charles II.*, April 23, 1670.

² Presumably this is the meaning to be attached to the phrase "would rather that it went no further," unless indeed it signifies the relatives' wish that the Earl's business, whatever it may have been, should not be further carried out.

at Turin, fell into a fever and died.¹ The claimant, James Percy, afterwards maintained that the dying Earl asked for him in his last moments, and wished that he might be present ;² but the witness upon whose testimony Percy put forward this statement was never publicly examined, and it may have been only an idle tale told to the credulous "Trunkmaker." The house or hostelry in which Northumberland's death occurred is unknown ; but he certainly expired at Turin on May 21, 1670, in the twenty-sixth year of his age. The grievous news, carried with undue haste to Lady Northumberland, wrought still more disaster ; and in consequence of the shock which she had received, the young widow gave birth to a dead child. How cruelly it reads, this catalogue of mortality—this grim list of deaths by which a single unhappy family was afflicted within the short space of a few months ! Little wonder that the Countess Elizabeth, thus bereft of husband and children, turned so pitiful a face to the world that the envious court beauties of France flattered themselves with stories of her faded loveliness.

The body of the deceased Earl of Northumberland was embalmed at Turin, and brought by slow stages to England. In Muddiman's *News-Letter* of June 9, 1670, is the entry : "The body of Lord Northumberland at Turin of fever caused by travelling in great heat was on the way from Blois, accompanied by his disconsolate lady : it is thought that the French King will seize his horses and most of what he has left in France '*par droit d'aubaine*.'"³ The body is waited for at Dover by coaches and attendants."⁴ In a letter of July 2 it is reported that "the young Countess of Northumberland landed at Dover on the 25th on her way to London, but having to go to Petworth to attend her deceased husband's funeral, she made

¹ Collins' *Peerage*, art. "Percy." His death occurred on May 21, 1670.

² See page 310.

³ "By right of escheat."

⁴ *Domestic State Papers, Charles II.*, Addenda ; *News-Letter* of H. Muddiman to Thomas Bond, haberdasher, Market Cross, Hereford.

but a short stay."¹ On July 12 Hugh Salisbury, writing from Portsmouth, informs Williamson that "the *Henrietta* yacht has arrived from Havre de Grace, with the body of the late Earl of Northumberland, who is to be buried at Petworth with his ancestors."² Immediately after the eleventh Earl had been laid to rest, the so-called "Trunk-maker," James Percy, came forward with a formal claim to the dormant honours of Northumberland. But of this man and of the stubborn but unsuccessful fight which he made for what he considered his rights, a full account will presently be given. His infant rival, the Lady Elizabeth Percy, and her mother first claim our attention for a space.

Rightly or wrongly, the Lady Elizabeth Percy was now held to be sole heir of all her father's possessions save only such lands as reverted to the Crown in consequence of the supposed failure of heirs male.³ The will of Earl Josceline left to his widow the guardianship of their child, until such time as she (the widow) should see fit to marry again; in which case Lady Elizabeth was to pass from her mother's care into that of her grandmother, the Dowager Countess of Northumberland. Earl Josceline no doubt intended this provision by way of safeguard for his daughter's vast fortune, and not by any means as a slur upon his wife's capabilities or good sense. He realised that the younger Lady Northumberland would have many suitors after his death, and that, since the grief of the young and beautiful is soon healed, she would probably remarry before many years had elapsed. It was not his wish that the administration of the Percy estates and the government of the heiress should devolve upon his future successor in Lady

The two
Countesses
of Northum-
berland;
second mar-
riage of the
younger.

¹ H. Muddiman (*News-Letter*) to Wm. Coward, Wells, July 2; *Domestic State Papers, Charles II.*, Addenda.

² *Domestic State Papers, Charles II.*, Addenda.

³ These lands were conferred by Charles II. upon his supposed natural son, the Duke of Monmouth, and others.

Northumberland's affections. Accordingly he named his mother guardian, in case of a second marriage; and the senior Countess, with the ill-nature for which she was notorious, gave her daughter-in-law clearly to understand that this portion of the will should be carried out to the letter.

For a short time after her husband's death, the young Countess continued to live in England with her child; but a combination of unpleasant circumstances eventually drove her back to France. To begin with, the Dowager Lady Northumberland (although as yet not legally entitled to do so) could not abstain from interfering in the management of the estate, and the education of Lady Elizabeth. In point of fact, this elderly descendant of the Howards was one of the most imperious and intriguing personages of her time. Kept in control by the somewhat austere temper of her husband, Earl Algernon, it was not until after his death that she found herself at liberty to gratify what De Fonblanque terms her "passion for social power, for money, and for matchmaking." Her extreme pride of birth seems all the less justifiable when it is remembered that the branch of the noble family to which she belonged was one of scant repute, and that both her mother and father had been convicted of gross frauds upon Charles I., and heavily fined for their dishonesty,¹ while her aunt was the infamous Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset.² The Dowager Countess of Northumberland, in spite of these antecedents, chose to flaunt her magnificence as publicly as possible. After her husband's death she removed from Northumberland House to a mansion upon the site of

¹ She was the daughter of Theophilus Howard, second Earl of Suffolk, who died in 1640 after the punishment mentioned above, by Elizabeth, daughter and heir of George, Earl of Dunbar. Suffolk inherited most of his property (including Northumberland House) from his uncle, the treacherous Earl of Northampton.

² The poisoner and adulterous wife, first of the third Earl of Essex, and afterwards of the favourite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset. She it was who procured the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.

which White's Club House afterwards stood, and which she called Suffolk House. Here she maintained semi-royal state, and never went abroad without "a footman walking bareheaded on either side of her coach, and others (coaches) following with her attendant women."¹ It is even stated that she never allowed the wife of her son Josceline (herself the daughter of an Earl) to be seated in her presence without first asking permission; and when the female members of her household misbehaved themselves she administered corporal punishment to them after the fashion of Catherine de Medicis with her maids of honour. She was, in truth, a notable termagant and tyrant, ill-bred in her ostentation, and by no means nice in the way she managed her grandchild's estates and turned their profits to her own use and benefit. There is more than a suspicion that in after years she absolutely *sold* this same grandchild's hand to one undesirable husband after another.² Her daughter-in-law, Josceline's handsome widow, she cordially disliked; and she never missed an opportunity of trying to bully or browbeat this unhappy lady, even when the latter was still in the state of ill-health which succeeded her bereavement. The young Countess could not endure the Dowager's persistent persecutions, and this was perhaps the principal reason which induced her to leave England. It is also stated that the amorous King plagued her with his advances, and made more than one attempt to add her to his seraglio. De Fonblanque adopts this story; but as the Countess was in mourning at the time, went little to Court, and had suffered severely in her good looks in consequence of illness, some doubt must be allowed to rest upon the subject. But Lady Northumberland's fortune and reputation for beauty made her a constant subject of town gossip, and scores of tales were told of the gallants, young and old, who were at her feet. Not only the King, but the widower Duke of York, was said to be enamoured

¹ *State Papers (Domestic)*, Charles II.

² See Brantôme's *Mémoires des Dames Galantes*.

of her ; and the diarists and news-letters even declared that one nobleman of the highest rank had died of a broken heart in consequence of her rejection of his suit. This was William Seymour, third Duke of Somerset, a near relative of her late husband,¹ and a nephew of her brother-in-law, Lord Essex. The Duke was so eager in his wooing that his cousin, Joscelyne Percy, had not been a twelvemonth dead before he renewed what is described as an "old courtship," but which cannot have been so old after all, since the suitor was still a minor. Lady Northumberland was at this time twenty-four, and may have thought her ducal spark too young, or his addresses ill-timed. At any rate she rejected them ; and it is given as a historical fact in Segar's *Baronage* that the love-lorn Duke William died on December 12, 1671, in his twenty-first year, "*at grief for the unkindness of Elizabeth, widow of Jocelyn Percy, Earl of Northumberland, whom he had long courted in vain.*"²

Whether the King pursued her too assiduously, or whether young Somerset's death preyed upon her nerves, and, in conjunction with the tyranny of her mother-in-law, filled her with distaste for England, we know that the Countess sailed from England in a royal yacht placed at her disposal early in 1673, and very soon afterwards made her second appearance in the fashionable world of Paris. At Paris, as in London, she at once became a reigning toast, and the fame of her charms (as well as of her fortune) was trumpeted abroad. She refused more than one offer of marriage, and it began to be whispered that she was holding herself in reserve for the Duke of York.³ One lover, however, proved more persistent than the rest. Ralph Montagu, the British Ambassador at the Court of France, was determined to win, if possible, this great matrimonial prize ; and as Montagu (or "Montaigu" as they called

¹ Somerset, as great-grandson of Elizabeth's favourite, Robert, Earl of Essex, was a second cousin of the late Earl of Northumberland.

² Segar, *Baronage of England*, p. 989.

³ *Hatton Correspondence*, i. 68 ; *Savile Correspondence*, pp. 32-38.

him) was looked upon by the French *grandes dames* as a most desirable conquest, these ladies were violently jealous of the new-comer who had thus succeeded in bringing him to her feet apparently without effort. Montagu was only a younger son at this time;¹ but his talents, ambition, and skill as a diplomatist had already marked him out as a man to be reckoned with in the future. At this time his features were remarkably handsome; although in later years he is described as "of a middle stature, inclining to fat; of a coarse, dark complexion." He was about thirty-five years of age,² and, save for his salary as ambassador, had little or no resources. Lady Northumberland he may have loved for herself alone, but it cannot have failed to occur to him that, with the aid of her money, he could rise the more speedily to those heights upon which he had already set his eyes.

The Countess was, no doubt, still suffering from the effects of her illness and recent sorrows, but this does not explain why the French ladies found, or professed to find, no trace of that beauty for which she was famous. Madame de la Fayette (who had long been an admirer of "*le beau Montaigne*") was the most severe of these feminine critics, for she refused to allow to the English Countess any remains of comeliness whatever, and described her as ill-dressed, plain of face, ungraceful, and old-looking beyond her years! The words of Madame de la Fayette (written to Madame de Sevigné, and published in the immortal *Lettres* of the latter) may be thus translated:—

"Madame de Northumberland came to call upon me to-day. I had been to pay her a visit with Madame de Coulanges. She seemed to me to be a woman who had once been handsome enough, but who *has not one solitary trace of beauty left*; nor are there any signs of youth remaining in her appearance or manner. I was quite astonished. Add to this that she dresses vilely, and is

¹ He was the second son of Edward, second Lord Montagu of Boughton.

² Having been born about 1638; *Nat. Dict. of Biography*.

quite destitute of grace; and you will understand that I was by no means dazzled."¹

The fair gossip must have viewed her visitor with prejudiced eyes. Male Paris raved about the "English beauty," her eyes, her complexion, and her "*taille superbe*"; and it is strange that if in 1673 she had lost her charms and grown elderly before her time (she was barely twenty-five), a close observer, the candid Evelyn, should be found full ten years later to write her down "*ye most beautifull Countesse of Northumberland*."² The equally flattering comment of the other chronicler of the period, Pepys, has already been quoted.³ Madame de la Fayette continues:—

"She seemed to understand the purport of everything that was said to her—or rather, that *I* said to her; for M. de la Rochefoucauld and Madame de Thianges, who had a great desire to meet her, did not come in till she was going. Montagu sent me word he would be with us: I have talked a great deal to him about her, and he has declared himself her devoted slave without the least reserve."⁴

But Montagu had to exert all his fascinations, and to humble himself in many ways, before he succeeded in gaining the hand of Lady Northumberland. His devotion, and the readiness with which he subordinated his own convenience and pleasure to those of the Countess, made him the object of much raillery at the hands of Madame de la Fayette and her friends. Underneath some of the jests written at his expense by these ladies, there is to be discerned not a little of envious rancour. He is made mock of for his servility; and it seems that much as he would like to pay a visit to the charming Madame de Brissac, he does not dare to do so, lest by any chance Miladi of Northumberland should take offence.⁵

¹ *Lettres de Madame de Sevigné*; Madame de la Fayette to Madame de Sevigné, Paris, April 15, 1673.

² *Evelyn's Diary* (ed. Bray), Oct. 10, 1683, vol. i. p. 564.

³ The Countess was one of Lely's "Windsor Beauties."

⁴ *Lettres de Madame de Sevigné*.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Perhaps the Countess was deterred from a second marriage by a genuine love and respect for the memory of her husband; perhaps she dreaded lest her mother-in-law should take advantage of Earl Josceline's will, and claim the guardianship of Lady Elizabeth Percy in case Montagu's suit were accepted. At all events the diplomatic cunning and courtier-craft which Ralph Montagu was forced to exercise in his ambassadorial capacity paled beside the similar qualities which his pursuit of Lady Northumberland called into play. On more than one occasion his hopes seemed so slender that the Seigné *coterie* fancied he must abandon them altogether, and hinted that the Countess must be mentally affected to refuse such a man. "Montaigu has gone away," wrote Madame de la Fayette; "they say that his hopes have been dashed to the ground. I verily believe that there is something wrong with the nymph's mind."¹ It may have been only a coincidence, but the date on which Montagu was thus reported to have received his *congé*, lacked but two days of being the anniversary of Josceline Percy's death at Turin.

The English Ambassador at Paris was too experienced in women, however, to lose heart because his mistress, through sentiment or caprice, had administered a temporary rebuff. He had none of that faint-heartedness which was said to have brought about the death of young Somerset, and Lady Northumberland's temporary "unkindness" did not daunt him. During the summer he returned to the attack with vigour anew, and pleaded his cause so well that the "cruel fair" at last capitulated. It is now known that Charles II. took an active interest in the affair,² and forwarded Montagu's interests with the Countess to the best of his ability, whether from disinterested benevolence or a desire to draw the runaway beauty back to England and the Court, it is impossible to say. The lady's family connections, on the contrary, were opposed to the match; and the Dowager Countess in particular inveighed against

¹ *Lettres de Madame de Seigné*; Paris, May 19, 1673.

² Letters to Sir Joseph Williamson; *Camden Society Publications*, vol. i.

it in the bitterest terms, although she realised that by its means her cherished plan of gaining possession of little Lady Elizabeth and the Percy estates might be brought to pass. When the young Countess left Paris for England on August 5, 1673, she brought Lady Elizabeth with her, and left the child in the care of their tried friend, Dr. Mapletoft, who was still practising his profession in London. The Countess then proceeded to Titchfield in Hampshire, where she had been born,¹ and where her sister, Lady Noël, now resided. There at the parish church, on August 24, 1673, she was married to Ralph Montagu, who had followed her from Paris.

It is unpleasant to have to record that, less than two months after their marriage, Montagu and his wife were reported as being at variance. Some busybody (not improbably the old Countess of Northumberland) taunted the bride with having been "tricked" into a wedding, and Montagu was accused of having "*bought her of her maid for £500 per annum.*"² Angry quarrels ensued between the pair, and a separation was freely talked of;³ indeed for some time they appeared to have actually lived apart. The birth of a son⁴ in the following year healed their differences; and whether Lady Northumberland was really the victim of Montagu's bribery or not, she continued to live tranquilly with her husband until her death. By the death of his elder brother, Edward, the Ambassador succeeded to the Barony of Montagu of Boughton. His town house in Bloomsbury having been destroyed by fire in 1686, he set to work, with the aid of Countess Elizabeth, to rebuild it upon the most magnificent French models. The staircase and ceilings were painted by Rosseau and La Fosse. This structure was purchased by the Government in 1753, and became the British Museum. The present buildings of the Museum succeeded it about 1840. Montagu's promising diplomatic career was brought to a conclusion in consequence of a quarrel with the

¹ Titchfield was the old seat of the Wriothesleys, Earls of Southampton.

² Letters to Sir James Williamson; *Camden Society*, vol. ii. 35, 63, 71.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ This was Ralph, Lord Monthermer, who *d.v.p.* 1702.

Duchess of Cleveland, the King's mistress, who, while she was yet Barbara Villiers, had been very intimate with him. The Duchess's daughter, Lady Sussex, having been placed for safe-keeping in a Parisian convent, Montagu visited her there, and coolly brought her to live under his own roof, with what intentions we are not informed. Duchess Barbara was furious, and vowed that he should pay dearly for meddling with her daughter. During the connection which had existed between them, Montagu had foolishly permitted himself to express many unfavourable opinions of the King and the Duke of York, and had even placed some of these strictures in writing. The angry Duchess now laid these incautious letters before her protector, careless as to what he might think of her own relations with the Ambassador, and seeking only the latter's disgrace.¹ Montagu's treachery was too gross for even the good-natured Charles to forgive. He was at once recalled, and his name struck out of the Privy Council. Nor indeed did he recover from the effects of his disgrace until the advent of William III., whose standard he was one of the first to join. This sovereign created him, in 1689, Viscount Monthermer and Earl of Montagu. His wife, Countess Elizabeth, died in September 1690, at the family seat of Boughton, Northants, at the age of forty-two, leaving three children—(1) Ralph, who predeceased his father in 1702; (2) John, second Duke of Montagu (1687–1749), whose chief titles to fame were his marriage with Lady Mary Churchill, youngest daughter of the great Marlborough, and his reputation for eccentricity and practical joking; and (3) Anne, who married Alexander Popham of Littlecote, co. Wilts. The Duke of Buccleuch is now the representative of Montagu's marriage with Lady Northumberland. Two years after the death of his first Countess, Montagu was shamefully united to the mad Duchess of Albemarle.² This poor demented creature was a great

¹ Harris's *Lives* (ed. 1814), v. 372, &c.

² Her first husband was Christopher Monk, second Duke of Albemarle, son of him who placed Charles II. on the throne.

heiress, and the only surviving child of Henry Cavendish, second Duke of Newcastle. Her weak-minded brother, Lord Ogle, became the first husband of Montagu's stepdaughter, Elizabeth Percy, heiress of Northumberland—an alliance almost as criminal as that which now took place. Montagu wooed his victim under the farcical guise of "the Emperor of China"¹ (she had declared that none but a great potentate should obtain her hand), a circumstance "which gave rise to a scene in Cibber's play of the 'Sick Lady Cured.'"² The unhappy Duchess was far from being cured, however. She was kept a close prisoner in the ground floor of Montagu House during her husband's life, served on bended knee, and addressed as "Your Imperial Majesty" by attendants dressed in Chinese costume. Montagu enjoyed the income from her large estates until his death. In 1705 he was created Marquis of Monthermer and Duke of Montagu by Queen Anne, through the influence of Marlborough. He died in 1709; and Swift sums up his character with a severity not wholly deserved as that of "as arrant a knave as any in his time."⁴ The terrible Doctor was merciless to his political opponents.

Immediately after the death of the eleventh Earl, and the reported extinction of the male line of the House of Percy, a claimant to the vacant honours presented himself in the person of one James Percy, already alluded to, a reputable and well-to-do citizen of Dublin. In early life Percy had been a trunk-maker, but he had long since abandoned this trade, and was now the head of a thriving firm of merchants in Dublin, the management of which he left to his eldest son (afterwards Sir Anthony Percy), while he himself came to England to prosecute what he fondly believed must prove

The Claimant
of Northumber-
land:
James Percy,
"the Trunk-
maker."

¹ Walpole's *Letters* (ed. 1880), viii. 514; Granger's *Biog. Hist.*, iv. 158.

² Pennant's *London*, p. 177.

³ The mad Duchess lived until the age of ninety-six, dying at Newcastle House Clerkenwell, in 1734. Fortunately she left no children by either husband.

⁴ Swift's *Works* (ed. 1824), xii. 237.

a successful suit. He landed in England from the Continent—whither he had gone either upon a merchandising expedition, or else for the purpose of paying his respects to the dead body of Earl Josceline—on October 11, 1670.¹ At this time he was fifty-one years of age, and had been for some time a widower. To the old retainers of the Percy family, at least, he was apparently well known; for he had already visited Petworth in 1654 (immediately after the death of his uncle James left him male representative of the Irish Percies),² and had seen and conversed with most of those about Earl Algernon, and in particular with Mr. Orlando Gee (now grown to be a very great man in his way, and general agent of all the Northumberland estates³). Indeed he asserted, without being contradicted, that Gee had been present when he was “recognised” by the old Earl as a near relative, if not as the next male heir after the reigning branch of the family. But whatever Earl Algernon may have known as to the exact connection of James Percy with the parent stem, the ideas of the latter on the subject were of the very

¹ Craik; *Romance of the Peerage*, iv. 288. Craik gives the best summary yet published of James Percy's legal struggles, and does not, like Collins, suppress any point distasteful to the winning side.

² James Percy, uncle of the Claimant, baptized at Pavenham in 1581 (see *Genealogy*, Plate III., and *Genealogy of the Irish Percies*), died in Dublin in the spring of 1654.

³ Sir Orlando Gee, knight (1619-1705) was a younger son of the Rev. John Gee, incumbent of Dunsford in Devon, and brother of the Rev. John Gee, M.A., who was first an Anglican divine, then a Catholic, and lastly a Protestant of the Puritan Sect (see *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*). Orlando Gee became one of the agents to Algernon, tenth Earl of Northumberland, and rose steadily until he became his principal factor. In this capacity he continued to serve under Earl Josceline, the Dowager Countess, and the Duchess of Somerset. Through the influence of Earl Algernon, he was in 1660 appointed Registrar to the Court of Admiralty. His efforts in opposing James Percy won him the favour of the Duke of Somerset, and in 1682 he received a knighthood. He appears to have been married three times; firstly to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Maxey; secondly (by license, 1662) to Eliza Barker; and thirdly to Ann, daughter of Robert Chilcot of Isleworth, who figures in the so-called “Peace of Syon” made between Earl Algernon and his tenants. Gee died in his house at Isleworth, and lies buried in the church there, where a handsome mural monument records his virtues.

vaguest description. He was indeed, as he quaintly puts it, "wildernised" when he came to trace his descent with the exactitude which the law of succession demands. When he came to London to prosecute his claim, he seems to have thought that there would be little or no difficulty in doing so. He believed in the existence of family documents which would establish his descent beyond cavil, and trusted in the good faith of the widowed Countesses of Northumberland, of Orlando Gee, and of Henry Champion (the last-named being custodian of the late Earl's papers) to place these supposed evidences at his disposal. His own line he could not trace back with certainty beyond his grandfather, Henry Percy of Pavenham; and when he was called upon by the counsel for Lady Northumberland to name the father of this Henry Percy, he was unable to do so, and could only venture two guesses—one absurd, the other highly improbable. To the modern genealogist this may, at first sight, put the Claimant's case out of court at once. Indeed Collins, Lodge, Burke, and other authorities upon the English peerage have seized upon Percy's inability to prove his grandfather's descent as the best evidence that he was an impostor. But before accepting the *dicta* of these writers, it is only fair to remember the extreme difficulties under which the Claimant laboured. His branch of the family had become impoverished; whatever documents they possessed had been lost, or else left in the safe-keeping of the chiefs of the house. While the ninth Earl of Northumberland and his seven brothers lived there seemed little probability of the senior line dying out; so that James Percy, the Claimant's uncle, living as he did in the remote districts of Ireland and finding himself fully occupied in maintaining life and property amid the successive political upheavals of that country, may be excused for not having paid much attention to the preservation of family records. The Claimant's father, Henry Percy, having been in the household of Lord Bacon, was seriously compromised by the disgrace of the great philo-

sopher. Thomas Bushell,¹ another of Bacon's retainers, was, we are told, obliged to fly to the Isle of Wight after his master's fall, and to live there disguised as a fisherman in order to escape rack and thumbscrew.² Even after Bacon's death, Bushell did not dare to show himself abroad, but resided in a wretched hut 470 feet above the sea level, "in the desolated island called the Calf of Man," by way of penance for his former associations.³ Henry Percy was under a similar ban, nor did he possess any of those talents which subsequently secured Bushell pardon and place. Indeed any chances which he had of being readmitted to society, through the influence of Earl Henry of Northumberland, were utterly ruined by the heartless manner in which he deserted his wife and children. In 1626 (the year following Bacon's decease) he took his family—the Claimant James Percy among the number—to "Dunnington in Lincoln," and left them there in great destitution; after which he came to London in company with his mistress, a serving-wench named Mary Varnum, "at which old Henrie, the Nineth Earle, was Angry."⁴ The wrath of the old Earl proved fatal to Henry Percy's prospects, and he died in abject poverty. It was probably his mistress, Mary Varnum, and not his wife, who was reported by the agents of the Dowager Countess to have lived as a pauper in an outhouse belonging to Mr. Montagu at Horton in Northamptonshire.

When deserted by his father, James Percy was only eight years of age. How he passed his youth we do not know, but he tells us in one of his Petitions to the King

¹ Thomas Bushell (1594-1674), after Bacon's fall, was obliged to hide himself (as described in the text) for many years. He devoted his enforced seclusion to chemical studies, and his knowledge in this direction eventually brought him to the notice of Charles I., who took him into favour. He became chief Farmer of the Royal Mines, held Lundy Island for the King during the Civil War, and continued in high favour under Charles II. We shall meet him later as one of the witnesses called by the Claimant, James Percy. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

² See *Dict. of Nat. Biography*, article "Bushell."

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The Case of James Percy.*

that he was compelled to fly the kingdom on account of his Royalist sympathies. Of education he can have received little—they were times when the sword usurped the place of the book; but he probably went to Ireland, where his uncle, James Percy, was eking out a scanty livelihood with the help of occasional remittances from the Earls of Northumberland.¹ From that time onward his life was one of hard, honest toil, until we find him coming to London, with a comfortable fortune at his back, to lay claim to what he believed to be his inheritance. But alas for the simple-minded Dublin merchant! He was soon to learn that earldoms and estates are not so easily acquired. His first step was to call upon the "Senior Countesse," as he called her, with a request which, in his innocence, he deemed she could not refuse. In other words he asked leave to examine the family records, then in Henry Champion's care at Syon, for the purpose of making out a detailed statement of the descent of his grandfather, Henry Percy of Pavenham. The Dowager Lady Northumberland referred him to her daughter-in-law, Earl Josceline's widow; but as Percy learned that the latter was *enceinte* and might yet give birth to a male heir, he decided to wait. A few months later, when this prospect was at an end, he visited Syon, where the "Junior Countesse" was residing, and repeated his request, adding a statement (true or false; but whether true or false, undoubtedly believed in by the man that made it) to the effect that Earl Josceline had upon his deathbed recognised the head of the Irish Percies as his heir male. Now whatever the Dowager Countess knew about his claims, young Lady Northumberland had never heard of James Percy, and believing her infant daughter to be the sole heir of the house, she declined to see the visitor or to enter into any discussion with him in regard to the papers guarded by Champion. Disgusted by what

¹ This, of course, is Percy's own statement, but it was admitted by Sir Orlando Gee, who sought to explain these gifts to the Irish Percies, by hinting at an *illegitimate* connection.

he considered wanton spite, Percy went back to his lodgings, where he wrote the following specimen of doggerel verse in condemnation of the young widow's discourtesy :—

“Wealth is a giant grown so high
That can a Percy now defy ;
Though, like David with slings and stones
Shows great champion's blood and bones.
Saul seeking asses, kingdom met ;
James seeks his right—finds foes too great.
Pray God give me a zealous heart,
That I may seek the better part :
Then shall I sing his praises clear ;
Scorn to peep through a window here.
This is done, that it shall be said
A Percy lives, tho' Josceline's dead.
Resolved am I to spend my all,
Before a Percy's name shall fall.”

These rhymes were despatched by special messenger to Lady Northumberland ; who, used no doubt to the graceful and complimentary couplets of the Montagus and Somersets, who called themselves her devoted slaves, was naturally very angry, and denounced the poor merchant as “an impostor.” Feeling perhaps that he had gone too far, our poetaster again took counsel of his muse, and ventured upon a second address, which was an appeal, rather than a defiance :—

“An impostor is a base name ;
By doing Justice clears the shame,
And blows away the clouds so high,
Makes truth shine clear as sun in sky.
I trust in God, that can restore
If not on earth, to Heaven's shore.”

But if by “doing justice” Percy meant the placing of the Northumberland records at his disposal, the Countess had no intention of acceding to his wishes ; and she left England a week later without answering his letters. Her

marriage to Montagu followed, and the Claimant now found himself opposed by an adversary even more determined—the unscrupulous Dowager Countess. Not only did the latter refuse to see him, but she forbade Henry Champion to give him any information. Though sadly disappointed, as he informs us in his “Case of James Percy,”¹ by the discovery that human nature was not so obliging or so honourable as he had anticipated, he did not feel cast down by these rebuffs, looking upon them as obstacles thrown in his way by interested persons, who sought “to keep him out of his rights.” Prevented from examining the private documents at Syon and Petworth, he decided upon applying to the Heralds’ College, among the archives of which he had no doubt but that he should be able to find the proofs which he sought.

The heralds, however, did almost as little to help Percy as the Countesses of Northumberland had done ; but it must be admitted that the inaction of Garter King of Arms and his subordinates arose from inability rather than from ill-will. The Claimant states that when he first approached Sir Edward Walker, the then Garter King, he found the latter “very rough” ; but that after a time Walker became more compliant, and consented to aid him as far as possible.² A book dealing with the Earls of Northumberland was produced, but upon examination it was found that “a leaf had been torn out,” which leaf “must have contained the very information” required—*i.e.* a full account of the cadet branches of the House of Percy from the time of the fourth Earl. This, of course, is the Claimant’s own story, unsupported by any *positive* admission on the part of the Heralds’ College ; and to those acquainted with the careful

¹ Various editions of the *Case of James Percy* were printed, and are to be found in the British Museum Library. Their gist is given in the text ; to quote them at length (they are extremely prolix) would be impossible.

² Sir Edward Walker died in February 1677, just after he had helped Percy to draw up a new pedigree tracing his descent from Sir Ingelgram, instead of from Sir Richard Percy.

manner in which modern heraldic records are kept, it may seem strange that so important a document should have been thus mutilated. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the old building of the Heralds' College had been destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666,¹ and that some of the manuscript treasures may have suffered in the flames; also that the portion of the genealogy sought dealt with the descent of Thomas Percy of the Gunpowder Treason, the obliteration of whose name probably seemed a commendable action to the ultra-loyal heralds of the Jacobean era. The Claimant's assertion that the record had been mutilated, and mutilated in a particular way, is borne out by a curious bit of circumstantial evidence unconsciously afforded by Walker's successor as Garter King of Arms, Sir William Dugdale. According to the version of James Percy there was a hiatus in the MS., where the page had been torn out or otherwise destroyed; after which the account was resumed something as follows:—

" . . . ard Percy, who married and had issue."

Who was the mysterious personage here referred to, and what was the missing syllable of the name *" . . . ard Percy"*? Naturally he turned, by Sir Edward Walker's advice, to other and unofficial chronicles, seeking for a Percy as nearly allied to the main stock as possible, whose Christian name ended in the syllable *"ard."* Unluckily for himself he selected Sir Richard Percy, fifth son of the eighth Earl, and for some time directed his endeavours towards tracing his descent from that impossible ancestor. We shall learn how ill he fared, and how, when forced to admit that he could not be Sir Richard's great-grandson, he laid the blame upon the Heralds' College, and accused Walker of wilfully misleading him. But a little later, when Sir William Dugdale was desirous of furthering the claims of Francis Percy of Cambridge to the earldom, it is evident

¹ The heralds occupied a house on Bennet Hill, near St. Paul's, which stood upon the site of a former mansion of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby. It was rebuilt shortly after the Great Fire.

that he too perused the mutilated volume, and, in his turn, founded a theory upon the identity of "... *ard Percy*." Dugdale was a practical genealogist, and not likely to fall into James Percy's blunder of choosing a name too near his own time to allow of a certain number of known descents. Accordingly he decided that Guiscard Percy, youngest brother of the seventh and eighth Earls, was the individual thus set down as having left legitimate issue; and even drew up a pedigree for his *protégé*, Francis of Cambridge, deriving the latter's descent from the same Guiscard (whom we now know to have died in early youth, and unmarried). The fact that James Percy and Sir William Dugdale were both at pains to fill in a similar gap in the MS., practically proves that such a gap existed, and enhances the probability that the Claimant's story of a mutilated leaf in the heraldic records was correct. In the light of subsequent researches, it appears most likely that "... *ard Percy*" stood for Edward Percy, born about the same time as Guiscard, and son of Josceline Percy of Newlands, fourth son of the fourth Earl.¹ From this Edward the so-called "Trunkmaker" may well have sprung, as we shall take occasion to point out presently. But he had no idea of Edward's existence, and so, by the advice of his lawyer, boldly claimed Sir Richard Percy,² brother of the "Wizard" Earl, as his ancestor. The claim was, upon the face of it, absurd. Sir Richard, a gallant soldier, had died at Angers within the memory of living men,³ and, so far as was known, a bachelor. To have been the great-grandfather of James Percy, according to the pedigree now put forward, he must have become a grandfather at the age of sixteen!⁴ The Claimant afterwards explained that he had "fixed on an ancestor for himself in the first instance, merely upon a tentative principle, or on the calculation that the discussion,

¹ See *Genealogy of the House of Percy*, Table III.

² *Ibid.*

³ In 1647, at the age of seventy-two.

⁴ The elder James Percy (here reputed to be his grandson) having been born at Pavenham on Feb. 12, 1581.

or even confutation of the pedigree . . . might throw light enough upon the subject to enable him to make out his true descent."¹ In other words, he was feeling in the dark; and hoped, by forcing the hands of the Dowager Countess, to compel her to give him a clue as to the identity of his great-grandparents. His legal adviser was one Thomas Swayne, an attorney "of Pimbourne (Pimpern?), Dorset." On February 3, 1672, Swayne lodged at the Signet Office, Whitehall, a formal claim on his client's behalf to the heritable honours and estates of the House of Northumberland. The case came before the Lords during the next session, which began on February 4, 1673. In the meantime Percy had presented a petition (the first of a long series) to the King, who "was Graciously pleased to return the Answer, 'God forbid he should hinder an Heir, but that he should have the Benefit of the Law.'"² The Dowager Countess of Northumberland had also moved in the matter, her opposition taking the form of an address to the Upper House on behalf of her grandchild, Lady Elizabeth Percy, and herself, in which she complained "that one calling himself James Percy (by profession a trunk maker in Dublin, Ireland) had assumed to himself the titles of Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Percy, to the dishonour of the family."³ This address was referred by the Lords to Committee upon Privilege. Two days later a counter-petition from the Claimant was, as soon as read, ordered to be "dismissed the House," perhaps (as Craik suggests) on account of some technical error in the drafting. On February 27 the Committee on Privilege took up the Countess's plea, with the result that James Percy was ordered to make an immediate answer in writing. No time was lost in obeying this mandate, the optimistic "Trunkmaker" no doubt believing that his affairs had begun to move in the swiftest and most satisfactory manner, and that the ancient dame in North-

¹ Craik; *Romance of the Peerage*.

² *Case of James Percy*; Percy's Petition to the King, 1679, &c.

³ *Journals of the House of Lords*.

umberland House was fighting his battle for him, just as his attorney had anticipated. He was not content with a mere written answer, but sent in also a second petition composed in much the same vein as his doggerel missive to Earl Algernon's widow. The Committee, after some consideration, found that the case could not with decency be dismissed in the summary fashion demanded by the Dowager Countess. Both parties were given a month to prepare their arguments. Lady Northumberland (who knew more about the Claimant than she chose to admit) at once sent agents to all the places in which the immediate ancestors of her opponent had resided during their years of wandering. We find her Yorkshire agent, Nathaniel Whalley,¹ reporting that the Percies were looked upon as "of small account" while they made the parish of Horton their home; and that a woman whom he pretends was the Claimant's mother (but who was probably Mary Varnum, the mistress of his father) had died not many years before in a hut, or outhouse, near the residence of Mr. Montagu,² in that place. The agent also reported that he could find no entry respecting the Claimant's birth either at Horton or at Pavenham Bury in Bedfordshire, which was not surprising, seeing that James Percy had been born at Harrowden, Northants, as afterwards appeared from the certificate which he produced. On his side Percy also visited these places, examined the registers there, and induced as many of his father's and grandfather's friends as he could to come to London as witnesses. On March 28 the Committee heard both sides briefly, and appeared impressed by Percy's evidence, since they

¹ Whalley to H. Champion; *Alnwick MSS.*

² George Montagu of Horton was son of the Earl of Manchester, and father of Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax. The Copes (to whom Percy's mother belonged) were for centuries persons of consequence in the neighbourhood, having held the manor of Denshanger, which, like Horton, is in the Hundred of Cleyley. John Cope, Esq., of Denshanger Manor, died 2 Hen. V.; his son Stephen Cope, of Denshanger, was aged twenty years in 13 Hen. VI.; and his grandson, Edward Cope, of Denshanger, died 2 Hen. VIII., leaving a daughter and heir, Anne Cope, then aged nine years. "Dame Cope," the Claimant's mother-in-law, was probably the widow of a descendant of this family.

came to the following resolution: "It is ordered that the House be informed of the difficulties of the case; and that the Committee are of opinion that the House should direct that His Majesty may be moved to hear his (James Percy's) title."¹ On the same day the Earl of Carlisle informed his brother peers that he had duly approached the King, in company with the Earl of Suffolk,² and that his Majesty had given the House leave to hear James Percy in due form.

The Claimant's answer and petition were then read; after which he appeared in company with his counsel at the bar of the House, the counsel of the Dowager Countess being likewise present. Percy was represented by Sergeant Francis Pemberton. This man, who rose to be Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, yet finished his days as a private lawyer, afterwards earned unenviable notoriety in connection with another case intimately connected with the fortunes of the House of Percy.³ Lady Northumberland's counsel was allowed first speech, and he apparently confined his efforts to showing that Sir Richard Percy could not possibly have been great-grandfather of the plaintiff. None of the information for which the Claimant hoped was forthcoming. Sergeant Pemberton then asked for a further allowance of time, setting forth that his client had not been permitted access to the family records, and that therefore he would be compelled to build up his claim from parish records, and evidence gathered from persons in many parts of the kingdom. To this the Lords replied that they were willing enough to allow Percy further time, if he could "make appear any probability towards his claim"—*i.e.* towards his claim of descent from Sir Richard, which of course was out of the question. Pemberton answered that his client now waived this claim altogether; but that

¹ Quoted from the original minute-book in the "*Report of the Select Committee of the Lords, appointed to Search for Precedents*; 1842."

² Brother of the Dowager Countess.

³ *i.e.* the trial of Köningsmarck for the murder of Thomas Thynn, when he summed up in favour of Köningsmarck and in apparent opposition to the evidence.

he still maintained his right to the Earldom of Northumberland, and that he had above forty witnesses already sworn at the bar of the House, and waiting to give evidence in his favour. Among these witnesses were Thomas Bushell, Farmer-General of the Royal Mines, and Thomas Fleetwood, both of whom had been with Henry Percy, father of James, in the service of Lord Bacon. These worthies, together with many others, were, according to the Claimant, prepared to swear that his father had again and again been recognised as a near relative by "Josceline Percy, the seventh son of the eighth Earl, and by the rest of those eight brethren." All that he asked for, therefore, was a little time in which to prove the exact degree of relationship which existed between his father and the brothers of the "Wizard" Earl. The Lords, however, refused to allow him a postponement of the case; and, on the motion of Lord Suffolk, brother of his chief opponent, voted to dismiss his claim without delay. One voice alone was raised in Percy's favour—that of the Earl of Anglesey,¹ an Irish nobleman, who held that the petitioner was being treated unfairly, and that the time he asked should be granted. It is possible that Anglesey was personally acquainted with the man whom he championed.

Thus disastrously ended the first effort of James Percy to establish his claim. Nothing daunted, he issued a printed address to the public, in which he attacked Orlando Gee and Henry Champion by name, alleging that they, "who could have set him right, wilfully took advantage of his ignorance."² He had met these agents of Lady Northumberland, he declared, at the residence of Dr. Lamplugh

¹ James Annesley, first Earl of Anglesey and Viscount Valentia (son of the Lord Mountmorris of Strafford's time) was born in Dublin in 1614. This was not the only occasion upon which he took up an independent attitude in the House of Lords. During the "Popish Terror" he was the only peer who dissented from the vote declaring the existence of a Catholic Plot. He also interceded manfully in favour of Archbishop Plunket. He was a man of enlightened mind, and one of the first peers in England "who devoted time and money to the formation of a great library."—*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

² *Case of James Percy.*

by special appointment, and Mr. Henry Champion had gone so far as to own "that Henry Percy that lived with my Lord Bacon was the right Heir, had he lived."¹ Yet he could not induce them to speak publicly in his favour. In conclusion he asked his readers to be patient with him, as he proposed before long to bring forward a second case, which could not be set aside as the first had been.

Percy's researches in the registers of Pavenham Bury, Harrowden, and Horton had proved his clear and legitimate descent for three generations. He was himself born at Harrowden in 1619, the second but eldest surviving son of Henry Percy (some-time servant to Lord Bacon) and Lydia Cope, his wife, "daughter of Dame Cope of Horton, Northants."² His father, Henry, was the third son of another Henry Percy, by his wife, the daughter of James Tibbot of Pavenham Bury, co. Bedford.³

The eldest son of this last-mentioned Henry was the James Percy, uncle of the Claimant, who died in Ireland without male issue in 1654.⁴ The second son, William, had already died in childhood; so that the representation of

Further
struggles of
James
Percy:
Justice Hales
pronounces
in his favour:
Lady Pembroke's long
memory.

¹ *Case of James Percy.*

² According to the "Register Booke" of Horton, Henry Percy and Lydia Cope were married by licence in 1614. Two children, Henry and Eliza, were born to them before James, but both died in early youth. The birth of William, illegitimate son of Henry Percy by Mary Varnum, may also be seen in this register.

³ In his *History of the Hundred of Willey* (Bedfordshire), Mr. William Marsh Harvey gives the following extracts from the Pavenham Registers:—

"*James Pearcy fil. Henrici Percy, baptisat. fuit xij^o die februarij, A^o. dni. 1581.*

"*Baptized Willm. Pearcy, fillius Henrici Pearcy, 15 Decembris, 1583.*

"*Baptis. Maria Pearcy filia Henrici Percy, 27 Septembris, 1590.*

"*Baptis. Alicia Pearcy filia Henrici Pearcy Januarij 18, A^o. q. dni. 1593.*

"*Sepulti fuere duo (Willm.) filii Henrici Pearcy partus 20 die Januarij Anno dni. 1592.*"

The baptism of a Francis, son of "Laurance Percy," and the marriage of a "Thomas Pearcy" and Elizabeth Seamer are also quoted. In the register of the neighbouring parish of Carlton, Bedfordshire, under date of January 30, 1596, is recorded the baptism of a "John, son of Laurence Percy."

⁴ He left two daughters, both married.

the family devolved upon the "Trunkmaker." Beyond his paternal grandfather Percy could not trace by the evidence of any documents at his disposal. He had, however, inherited a family tradition that this first Henry, together with three other children, brothers and sisters, were of near kin to the Earls of Northumberland, and that they had been brought from the North by stealth immediately after the re-establishment of Protestantism in 1559. Of one of these brothers, his grand-uncle Robert Percy, the Claimant had personal knowledge; and he claimed to be able to produce numerous witnesses from the districts about Pavenham, Harrowden, and Horton, who would swear to the coming of the four from the North, and their settlement in that part of the country. The story may seem too romantic to be true, but the period was one which produced many stranger romances; and there is not wanting a very similar case which occurred almost at the same time, and which rests upon a historical basis. Several children of the ancient Catholic family of Tempest of Holmside in Durham were smuggled out of their own home by friends during the Elizabethan persecutions, and sent to fosterage with respectable families in Oxford and Kent, where they grew up as peasants, or at least in stations far beneath the rank of their ancestors.¹ Whether the Claimant's ancestors were actually brought to Northamptonshire in this manner or not, seems past positive proof or refutation; but it is worth observing that James Percy found at least one believer in his published account of the tradition who, from her intimate knowledge of the Northumberland family ties, deserves at least to be heard with attention. This was Anne, Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery,² a descendant of Henry Clifford,

¹ Surtees; *History of Durham* (Chester Ward).

² She was the sole daughter and heir of George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland; and had married, firstly, Richard Sacville, third Earl of Dorset (by whom she had issue two daughters and co-heirs, Margaret, wife of John Tufton, Earl of Thanet, and Isabel, wife of James Compton, Earl of Northampton); and secondly, as his second wife, Philip Herbert, fourth Earl of Pembroke and first Earl of Montgomery (by whom she had no issue).

Earl of Cumberland,¹ by his marriage with Lady Margaret Percy, sister of the "unlucky Earl."¹ It will be remembered that the Earl of Cumberland was a practical sympathiser with his luckless brother-in-law during the latter's marital troubles, and indeed acted for a time as guardian of the Percy estates. Lady Pembroke openly stated at Court and elsewhere that "*if the Trunkmaker really came from Pavenham,² he must be one of those four Percy children that in the time of the troubles in 1559 were sent out of the North in Hampiers³ to old Dame Vaux at Harraden⁴ in Northamptonshire.⁵*"

The appearance of this unexpected ally upon Percy's side startled Lady Northumberland and her agents as much as it encouraged the Claimant. The former now decided upon an entirely new move, with a view of disconcerting their adversary. Mention has been made of a William Percy, illegitimate son of the Trunkmaker's father. This person had been brought to London by Orlando Gee, and was established as a glover under the patronage of the Dowager Countess. He was persuaded without much difficulty to put forward in his turn a claim to the Earldom, alleging that "James Percy was either not the son of Henry Percy of Horton, or else but a bastard." In the *Gazette* was printed "*a Pedigree of William Percy, set forth to undeceive the people*"; and the same publication announced that the former Claimant must be an impostor, since the said William, and not he, was the son of Henry Percy of Horton, late servant to Lord Bacon.

The Claimant was then lodging at the house of a Dr.

¹ See *Genealogy*, Table II.

² Pavenham was held *temp.* Henry VII. by Sir Thomas Cheyne, knt., from whom it passed to his daughter and heir Elizabeth, wife of Thomas, second Lord Vaux of Harrowden.

³ Hampers or panniers. The spelling of the word apparently puzzled Craik.

⁴ This was the Elizabeth Cheyne, heir of Pavenham, mentioned in the above note. Lady Vaux and all her generation were Romanists. Her son William, third Lord Vaux, married firstly a Beaumont of Grace Dieu, and secondly Mary Tresham, aunt of Francis Tresham of the Gunpowder Plot.

⁵ *Case of James Percy.*

Chamberlaine¹; and this gentleman, together with Colonel William Ayres and others, accompanied James to the shop in which his half-brother had been recently established. At first William Percy stuck stoutly to the tale which he had been taught; but being a man of little intelligence he soon became confused, and made several extraordinary and impossible assertions, among others that his father "was the Earl's brother." Eventually he owned that he spoke "as the Agents told him; for he knew nothing but what they told him."² To this James Percy replied that he himself was the only surviving legitimate son of Henry Percy of Horton, who was not an Earl's brother, but merely the son of Henry Percy of Pavenham. William Percy, as he fully proved by a certificated extract from the Parish Register of Horton, was the base-born child of his said father, by Mary Varnum, a servant of Madam Cope. The said Henry Percy, after the downfall of Lord Bacon, "took his wife and children and left them at Dunington in Lincoln, and then cohabited with Mary Varnum, servant of his wife's mother, at which old Henry the Ninth Earl was angry." His published account of the interview, from which the above extracts are taken, closes thus: "I should never have uncovered my Father's Nakedness, had not my Brother (and wicked Agents and Men hard of Belief) forced me to it. Now suppose they had proved Mary Varnum married, yet I was seven years elder. But to put up a poor, ignorant man, a journeyman Glover, and christen his Children to deceive the World,³ and to slight the true Heir, because I was a Trunkmaker! The Trade is good, and by God's Blessing it hath given me bread in the extremity of my Travails, till I obtained the merchandizing Trade, and can make my three Sons Freemen and Merchants of London, and Dublin in Ireland, and of

¹ Perhaps, as Craik suggests, the author of *The Present State of England*.

² *Case of James Percy*.

³ The offspring of William Percy were christened by family names such as "Algernon," "Josceline," and "Henry"; but there is nothing to show that this was done by counsel of Gee, Champion, and the others.

Norwich in Norfolk, and have likewise trained them up in Handicrafts, so that if they fail in the Mystery of Merchandizing, they may, with God's Blessing, live upon their Ingenuity."¹

This composition, evidently from his own pen, is a specimen of the incoherent, ungrammatical manner in which the Claimant's petitions and statements were written; but the allusion to his father, and the manliness with which he avows his former position as a tradesman, show us that he was a person of strong natural feeling, and rugged honesty of character. The claim of William Percy that his father "was brother to the Earl" is explained by the pretended line of descent which Gee and Champion drew up for him. Their first intention was to make him out a son of that William Percy of Oxford (third son of the eighth Earl) whose strange secluded life ended in 1648; but they subsequently changed their minds, and in the descent claimed for him in the *Gazette*, he is alleged to have been a son of Henry, Lord Percy of Alnwick, (brother of the tenth Earl), begotten, it was suggested, while the latter was masquerading as plain Henry Percy at Horton in Northamptonshire.² But in truth one story was well-nigh as good as another in the eyes of Gee and his confederates; their sole intention being to embarrass the Claimant, James Percy, by vexatious cross-suits, and to drive him from the field, after which it would be easy enough to get rid of the journeyman glover by proving that his father and mother had never been married. The unlooked-for breakdown of William Percy's evidence in the presence of several reputable witnesses, and the irrefutable proofs that he was an illegitimate brother of James, upset these plans altogether. Indeed the failure of the clumsy scheme, together with the declaration of Lady Pembroke, had the effect of placing the Claimant in a far better position than before, and of vastly increasing the number of his sympathisers.

In Trinity Term 1674, James Percy brought an action

¹ *Case of James Percy.*

² Craik.

for slander in the Court of King's Bench, against John Clarke, one of Lady Northumberland's agents. Clarke had called him an impostor. The case was tried by Sir Edward Hales; and although several of the plaintiff's witnesses failed to appear, Hales declared in open court that the plaintiff had proved himself "a true Percy, legitimate for three generations, of the blood of the Percies of Northumberland." The judge further expressed it as his belief, from the evidence, that Percy "was cousin and next heir of Josceline, eleventh Earl of Northumberland, only he was afraid that he had taken his descent a little too low.¹ He then advised the plaintiff to come better prepared next time. For the present he must submit to a non-suit. We have no means of discovering the nature of the evidence produced which led Hales to make this remarkable statement, except it be that Percy brought forward witnesses to prove the statements alluded to in his comments upon a subsequent trial:—

"Had Justice Scroggs² suffered the Witnesses to speak at the Tryal, it would have been sufficiently prov'd that James Percy and Henry Percy were brothers, and the sons of Henry Percy that was sent out of the North . . . and were so owned by Henry the ninth Earl and his seven brethren, and did oft visit each other.

"Algernoon the tenth Earl did own James the Unkle in Ireland to be the next Heir, if the Brother, Henry Lord Percy, died without Issue Male of his Body; and sent James Percy, the Unkle of James the Clayment £100 into Ireland; and likewise did often own James Percy the Trunkmaker, and give him Money, and acknowledged that he was the next Heir Male if his Son should dye and leave no Heire-males of his Body.

"Henry Lord Percy (brother of Algernoon) did declare on his Deathbed that James Percy a Trunkmaker was the next Heir, if his Brother's Son should die.

"Joscelin the eleventh Earl, beyond Sea, did declare upon his death-bed, 'That James Percy the Trunk-Maker

¹ *i.e.* from Sir Richard Percy (d. 1647).

² Who tried the later case.

in Ireland was the next Heir-Male, if he were living;’ and Cried out ‘Oh that he were here now.’”¹

If indeed the Claimant was able to produce witnesses to prove that he had been recognised as next heir of the blood by three successive Earls of Northumberland, and by Henry, Lord Percy, Sir Edward Hales would have been justified, in spite of the absurd claim of descent from Sir Richard Percy, in expressing a favourable opinion of the plaintiff's case. If no such evidence was laid before him, this public pronouncement appears in the last degree unwarrantable. But it is hard to believe that Hales could so commit himself without good and sufficient reason.

But the Claimant was as far as ever from obtaining that which he sought most earnestly, viz. a search warrant to examine the family papers in Henry Champion's care. In the absence of such authority, he set himself to follow Justice Hales' advice, and to seek out a likelier great-grandfather with such help as the hints of Lady Pembroke and hearsay evidence of friends could give him. This time he chose as his ancestor Sir Ingelgram Percy, third son of the fifth Earl—that same Sir Ingelgram who, after being associated with his brother Sir Henry in the “Pilgrimage of Grace,” suffered imprisonment in the Tower, and there scrawled the pathetic legend, “INGGRAM PERCY. *Saro fidei*.”² An action was instituted against Sir John Coplestone, “trustee for Lady Clifford,” for the recovery of certain lands in the county Somerset,³ which the Trunkmaker claimed as belonging of right to the heir male of the House of Percy, but which, after the death of Josceline, had been granted to Lady Clifford⁴ by the Crown. Other extensive landed estates held by the

New line of descent alleged: “Privilege” bars the way.

¹ *Case of James Percy*.

² See *ante*, under the sixth Earl. See also *Genealogy*, Table II.

³ The estate of Cannington, Somerset.

⁴ Wife of Thomas, Lord Clifford, of the “Cabal” Ministry.

eleventh Earl and his predecessors had also lapsed to the Crown at the former's death, and had, in a similar way, been bestowed upon Court favourites, such as the Duke of Monmouth, so that in this suit Percy found himself opposed, openly or in secret, by a number of wealthy and influential persons. Sir John Coplestone (declares the Claimant) sheltered himself for as long a time as he could under a plea of Privilege, based upon his being the representative of a peeress; but the case was at length brought up for trial, when Justice Scroggs refused to admit the evidence of many of Percy's witnesses, and a verdict was therefore returned in favour of Coplestone, with £80 costs, which the plaintiff was ordered to pay into Court without delay.

The Claimant, according to his custom, published a manifesto after this defeat, in which he abandoned the pretended descent from Sir Richard Percy altogether, and asserted that the four children sent "in hampiers from the North" to Lady Vaux of Harrowden, were the offspring of Sir Ingelgram Percy. To accept this pedigree, as Craik points out, is to admit that the Claimant's grandfather Henry (as a son of Sir Ingelgram) was at least seventy-five or seventy-six years of age before his son's marriage, and ninety before the birth of his illegitimate grandson, William the glover. "Intervals," remarks this author, "by no means impossible, but yet considerably beyond what are usual."¹ There existed, however, another piece of circumstantial evidence (probably unknown at the time, certainly not alluded to either by James Percy or his opponents) which tends to prove that Sir Ingelgram was not the father of the "Four Percies of Pavenham." This was Sir Ingelgram's will, made shortly before his death, in which no mention is made of any offspring save a daughter,² who, from the wording of the document in question, may be

¹ *Romance of the Peerage*.

² She married Tempest of Broughton. The will, dated June 7, 1538, was probated March 21, 1539. Sir Ingelgram left £20 to his daughter Isabell till of lawful age, and a sum of twenty marks for her mother (name not given).

assumed to have been illegitimate. It is possible, of course, that Sir Ingelgram may, for reasons of his own, have omitted the names of his legitimate children from his will. His uncle, Josceline Percy, for instance, in a will presently to be quoted, did not make any mention of his undoubted son, Edward Percy. But, on the other hand, it can be readily shown that Edward was son of Josceline; whereas no known evidence of any sort exists to indicate that Sir Ingelgram was even married. Moreover the latter died in 1540—nineteen years before the date upon which the "Four Percies" were said to have been brought from the North, so that these young persons, if they were indeed children of Sir Ingelgram, must have long passed the age at which they could be concealed in hampers or panniers. Altogether the assumed descent of James Percy from Sir Ingelgram (in the third degree at least) appears highly improbable; and the Claimant would have been well advised had he abandoned it in its turn and directed his attention to the progeny of Josceline of Newlands, brother of the fifth Earl, among whom he might well have found the great-grandfather that he looked for. But his advisers evidently believed (and their opinion was shared by so skilled a genealogist as Sir William Dugdale) that the Newlands branch was too remote for their purpose. While he laboured to discover evidence of Sir Ingelgram Percy's marriage, valuable time was slipping by, and important witnesses (like Thomas Bushell, his father's friend)¹ were dying. At last, in 1676, he returned to London without having found anything new in support of his claim.

On June 13 in that year he began an action "against John Blackeston, Esquire,"² for slander and defamation. The case was removed from the Guildhall to the King's Bench, Westminster, and was thus delayed for eleven months. It eventually came up for trial on May 7, 1677. The plaintiff, with the aid of two of his sons, had engaged

¹ Bushell died in 1674.

² Another agent of the Dowager Countess of Northumberland.

"no fewer than fourteen counsel," and had subpoenaed sixty-five witnesses. The sum of the distances travelled by these witnesses, he informs us, amounted to "full four thousand miles." Under the circumstances it is not surprising to learn that Percy's preliminary expenses were very large. It must have been a cruel blow to the unfortunate man, when, after all his preparations, disbursements, and delays, he was after all *dismissed without a hearing!* Once more the hateful question of Privilege barred the way. Blackeston, through his counsel, protested against the case being even entered upon, inasmuch as he was the servant or agent of the Countess Dowager and of the young Elizabeth, Baroness Percy, being steward of their courts and receiver of their rents. As he was actually in their employment when the alleged slanders were uttered, he claimed to be protected by "Privilege of Peerage." "Whereupon," says Percy in his subsequent Memorial to the House of Commons,¹ "all your Petitioner's Counsell refused to plead, altho' the Court would have heard them, and proceeded to trial upon the Cause: but the Counsell replied 'they had no mind to go to the Tower, some of them having been there before.' And thus the Trial was put off. Whereupon Mr. Justice Wilde, hearing these things, stood up and said in open Court: 'Fye, fye, Gentlemen; is this a time to insist upon Privilege, when you forced the plaintiff to the Trial, and have put him to so great Expense, Travel, and Labour? you do but cast cold Water upon your Cause. It is not the first time this Cause hath been before this Court.'" Blackeston, on being questioned, avowed that "in any event the Countess was to bear him harmless." In spite of Justice Wilde's remonstrance the lawyers were afraid to plead, and the trial was practically still-born. Percy's sixty-five witnesses journeyed back the "full four thousand miles" which they had traversed to give evidence in his favour, and, worse than all, the poor Claimant was condemned in costs, because his own lawyers had refused to face the bugbear of Privilege.

¹ Percy's *Memorial to the House of Commons*. Also the *Case of James Percy*.

As long as his money held out, however, the Trunk-maker was determined to continue the contest even while such unfair weapons were used against him. On May 14 of the same year he actually succeeded in winning a case (although a very small one). The names of the defendants have not been preserved, but they were sued in the Court of King's Bench, Westminster (probably before the same Justice Wilde), and a verdict obtained against them for £300 damages on the charge of "scandalizing the Claimant's right and title." It is doubtful whether these damages were ever collected. At any rate we find Percy in the following year (1678) petitioning the House of Commons in these terms:—

"Your Petitioner hath been all along perplexed and troubled by many suits at law, unjustly commenced against him by the agents of the defendants, or some of them, on purpose to tire him out and ruin him by chargeable defences; and it is now almost eight years since he began his claim . . . all of which time he hath vigourously and industriously pursued his right though against so great and unequal force and opposition that he hath not been able to prevail; and therefore humbly craves leave to bring the state of his case and the narrative of his proceedings before this honourable House, imploring their assistance to appear, mediate, and interpose in his behalf."

Parliament had other and more serious things to think of, however, than petitions from peerage claimants. Oates and Bedloe had just "revealed" what they called the Popish Plot, the Test Act had passed both Houses, and the country was in a ferment. Percy's memorial was accordingly still unread, when Parliament was prorogued and dissolved by the King in January 1679. A few weeks later, on February 6, the case against Blackeston came up for the second and last time. The defendant once more pleaded "Peerage Privilege" as a protection, and Percy was non-suited. His counsel now told him that his only hope of relief lay in a special Act of Parliament.

Deeply dejected, he resolved to pay a visit to Ireland

(whither he had not been for eight years), in order to "Inform, Incourage, and Direct his eldest son Anthony Percy," together with the latter's brothers, Henry and John.¹ It is likely that he also wished to raise money, for his once well-filled purse had been sadly depleted by the heavy losses which he had undergone.

When the Claimant returned to England in the autumn of 1679, he found that yet another Parliament had met, and been in turn dissolved,² without giving any attention to his case. One of his first actions was, on October 21, to address a petition to James, Duke of York. Why he should have looked for aid or relief to this quarter is hard to say.

Petition to
the King:
cruel jest of
the Duke of
Monmouth:
"Privilege"
again.

James had been deprived by the Test Act of all his offices and dignities; and Monmouth, Shaftesbury, and the Protestant party were clamouring for the passage of an Exclusion Act, whereby the "royal papist" might even be prevented from inheriting the Crown. Percy himself may have been a Catholic; or he may have merely addressed James from a feeling of pique against the House of Commons, which had left his memorial unanswered. The Duke advised him to address the King; and this he did in two petitions, one dated November 25, and another December 18, 1679. The old ground is gone over once more, and bitter complaint is made that "the True Heir, looking after his birth-right, should be put in the *Gazet* for an impostor. . . . It is very sad when a Lost Dog shall find Entrance and a Just man be kept Out." The "lost dog" referred to is apparently the weak-minded Lord Ogle, who had been married early in the same year to Lady Elizabeth Percy, and who had thereupon assumed the name and arms of Percy. On that occasion the Claimant had sent from Dublin to the office

¹ *Petition to the King* (1679). From this it will be seen that the Claimant's sons were all three now in Ireland, and that the two younger had left or lost their "merchandizing" businesses in Norwich and London.

² This was the *Habeas Corpus Parliament*, dissolved May 27, 1679, after a session of less than three months.

of the *Gazette*, for publication, the following characteristic advertisement :—

"Whereas the Lord Ogle is published in Print to have changed his name from Cavendish to Percy upon his marriage with the Lady Elizabeth Percy. James Percy, Esquire, the true Heir-Male of the Blood of the House of Northumberland, that hath stood to Justify his claim about Ten Years, and hath proved himself a Legitimate Percy in the King's Bench, doth likewise Publish to the World that he will Justify his Right *durante vita*, and hopes the Publick will not be deceived by any Artifice; for he desires no more but a free, legal, and final determination of his said Claim. *Fiat Justitia & ruat Cælum!* J. P."

This announcement he now quotes in full to the King. He is also bold enough to object because George Fitz-Roy, natural son of Charles, had been created Earl of Northumberland. In this petition also he refers to a relationship which will call for notice presently—that which he claims as existing between himself and Francis Percy of Cambridge, who afterwards came forward with the endorsement of Sir William Dugdale to assert his own alleged rights to the Earldom. James Percy, speaking of those who, after himself and his posterity, stand next in the order of succession, says: "Now for Alexander Percy, gentleman, of Ireland, that rides in the Life Guards; and Mr. Roger Percy, shoemaker at Charing Cross; and *Mr Francis Percy, stone-cutter of Cambridge*, and his brother a tailor; I acknowledge them to be cousins and descended from *the sons of Robert Percy, my great-uncle*. And by reason I know not which is the eldest and nearest of kin of that collateral line, therefore I humbly pray that the Heralds may take notice, and help them to find out the truth seriously. For my cordial endeavours are to preserve the moon¹ from being misted or eclipsed any more."²

¹ *i.e.* the crescent moon, badge of the House of Percy.

² In a species of postscript to his petition, the Claimant mentions as among his cousins "Captain Percy of Beverley, a descendant of the fourth Earl," and "Sir Thomas Percy, a descendant of the second Earl." In the first of these

This long petition (which, if it ever really reached the King's eyes, probably amused his Majesty vastly) was drawn up and signed at the Claimant's new lodgings "at Mr. Curtis his house in Windsor Court, Mugwell Street, near Cripplegate"; after which Percy presented it in person "at the office of Sir William Glasco, Master in Waiting," where he was told to call for an answer on December 22. This he did, but Glasco could not or would not see him. He returned on the following day, when "Sir William returned this answer by his Maid-Servant that he was busie with some friends, and that the King would hear nothing until after the Christmas Hollidays." So that no more satisfaction was obtainable from the King than from the Parliament or the Law Courts.

Windsor Court, Mugwell Street, wherein James Percy on *his* part spent the Christmas of 1679 anything but delectably, was a small byway once the approach to Nevill's Inn, wherein the Nevills, Earls of Westmoreland, had formerly resided.¹ In Mugwell, otherwise Monkwell Street, stood Barber Surgeons' Hall; and hardly was Grub Street more "celebrated for the (supposed) residence of authors of the less fortunate tribe, and the trite and illiterate jests of the more favoured." Of the Mr. Curtis in whose house Percy lodged, nothing is known. The "Christmas Hollidays" of 1679-80 found the Claimant in the thick of a lawsuit with his former attorney, Thomas Swayne, who had now turned against him, and whom he terms "a greate scoundrel."² On one occasion while walking with Henry Champion, Lady Northumberland's agent,³ in Temple Gardens, the latter asked him who had helped him to

one recognises Alan Percy of Beverley, who died 1687 [see *Genealogy*, Table III.]; while the second was probably Captain Thomas Percy of Dormer's regiment, who was of Bishop Percy's kin, and who died in Spain 1709-10.

¹ In the fourth of Henry IV., Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland, died possessed of this mansion. It afterwards passed to the Lords Windsor, from whom the court took its name.

² *Case of James Percy. Petition to the House of Lords.*

³ Curiously enough he appears to have continued on terms of intimacy with Champion, Gee, and others of the Dowager's chief advisers.

his attorney. "I believe yourself or the devil sent him to me," answered Percy. At last he could support Swayne's exactions and mismanagement no longer, and accordingly dismissed him. The lawyer had fattened upon his client for so long that he could not bring himself to let Percy go so easily. Accordingly he got up three successive suits against him, the litigation lasting in all three years. But Percy clearly had the rights of it, for Swayne was "cast in all three cases." He eluded every attempt to lay hands upon him, however, and the Claimant never recovered the costs allowed him in the three suits. It is possible that Swayne had something to do with stirring up James Percy's cousin, Francis of Cambridge, to claim the earldom; at least it is an odd coincidence that Swayne's dismissal was almost immediately followed by Francis Percy's claim.

The suit by dint of which the attorney harassed his former client during the winter of 1679-80 dealt with a sum of money which he asserted had been promised to him for opening up negotiations for a marriage between Anthony Percy of Dublin, eldest son of the Claimant, and one of the daughters of Viscount Newport (afterwards Earl of Bradford). Careful examination into this strange affair leads to the conclusion that it was nothing more than a hoax or practical joke, conceived in very bad taste, and aimed equally at Lord Newport and James Percy. Furthermore, it would appear that the young Duke of Monmouth was at the bottom of the affair. Newport was a man of rank and property,¹ Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, and for some time Treasurer of the Household. He had married Lady Diana Russell, daughter of Francis, fourth Earl of Bedford. It is scarcely possible that a man of such position and connections should be willing to bestow the hand of his daughter upon a Dublin merchant

¹ Francis Newport, Viscount Newport, created Earl of Bradford in 1694, was born in 1620 and died in 1708. His grandchild and the eventual representative of the family married Sir Orlando Bridgman, from whom descends the present Earl of Bradford.

of moderate fortune, the son of the poor "Trunkmaker" who did not even possess enough credit to procure the reading of his petition at Court. Yet the attorney, Swayne, persuaded Percy that Newport was willing to enter into such an alliance, adding "that a marriage between Anthony and one of the Ladies Newport would go far to set matters to rights," since the Viscount was hand-in-glove with Monmouth, "the Protestant Prince," and owned a joint share in a sum of £12,000 for which the Duke had sold some of the lapsed Percy estates which he had been granted. However Swayne (or his probable prompter, Monmouth) managed things, "a preliminary interview" actually took place between the "Trunkmaker" and Lord Newport. Subsequently Swayne took his dupe to visit Monmouth, who assured Percy that he would aid the proposed Newport alliance to the best of his ability. Duke Absalom also "told the Complainant (Percy) that he should have a fair trial at law, and if the Claimant proved himself heir male, God forbid he should hinder him. Upon which the Complainant returned with great joy; posted away into Northumberland, and delivered declarations in ejectment upon those lands the Duke had recovered of the Countess upon pretence that there was no heir male of the Percies living."

Monmouth took care to drop Lady Northumberland a hint of what was afoot (he was deeply interested in the wooing of Lady Elizabeth Percy by his friend, Mr. Thomas Thynn), with the result that the Dowager Countess endeavoured with all her might to make the Claimant's northern journey an unpleasant one. At York the latter was arrested on two trumped up charges of fraud, and he even asserts that when he reached Newcastle an attempt was made upon his life. The declarations in ejectment having been duly served, however, the trial came on, Percy fully expecting the fair play promised him. To his utter surprise, a plea of Privilege was set up by Monmouth's counsel, which, of course, stopped the proceedings; "whereupon the Claimant went to Mr. Rosse, the Duke's

secretary, to know why it was so, when the Duke did promise he would not stand upon Privilege, but a fair trial should be had. Mr. Rosse replied that the Duke could not set aside his privilege." Percy found that the prospect of an alliance between his son Anthony and Lord Newport's daughter was equally illusory, for Newport, when called upon, denied all knowledge of the affair, which we therefore take to be a cruel jest perpetrated at the Claimant's expense by Monmouth, with Swayne for accessory. The double disappointment dazed Percy for a time, and he disappeared from his old haunts in Whitehall and Westminster, being quite "wildernised" (as he expresses it) by the wanton trick played upon him by "that great and good prince, King Monmouth." At this his enemies went about boasting that "the ten years' Claimant was run away"; which speedily drew him forth from his retirement, and caused him to issue a new manifesto. "By God's Providence," he wrote, "I remain at Mr. Ralph Carter's house, a trunkmaker's in Fleet Street, over against Sergeant's Inn, where the messenger may find James Percy to serve the King's royal Writ of Summons."

A few weeks after the opening of the new, or fourth, Parliament of Charles II., a petition was presented in the House of Lords, on behalf of the Claimant, desiring that a day might be appointed for him to be heard to make out his title. The "Popish Plot," and the coming impeachment of the unfortunate Viscount Stafford, occupied the minds of the Peers, but they found time to briefly debate Percy's plea. Eventually it was rejected by a large majority. The Earl of Anglesey spoke stoutly in favour of the Claimant, as he had done on a former occasion; and protested against the decision arrived at on the grounds—(1) that the claim was one which could be examined nowhere but in that House; (2) that it was unjust to reject any claim without a hearing; (3) that the course taken was contrary to precedent and constant usage; and (4) that the dismissal of the claim by a former Parliament was no sufficient reason in the

circumstances why it should not be reconsidered by the present.

It was certainly a new case, and involved new evidence. "A claim of succession," says Craik, "whether to honours or property, has its essence or entire substance and meaning in the line of descent along which it is traced, and its having been disproved when traced by one line, can have no effect or bearing whatever upon its validity when traced by another."

One of the witnesses whom James Percy had summoned to give evidence in his behalf was a worthy tradesman of Cambridge, Francis Percy by name. A new Claimant: the "Stone-cutter" follows the "Trunk-maker." As we have seen, the "Trunkmaker" called this man his cousin, the grandson of his uncle Robert; but it is uncertain whether Francis ever admitted the relationship, or whether he was one of the sixty-five witnesses who came to London in 1677 to attend the suit against Blackeston. Four years afterwards, however, when Parliament rejected the plea of James Percy for the second time, Francis of Cambridge resolved to try his own luck as a claimant to the Earldom of Northumberland. At this time he was only thirty-two years of age,¹ and a stonecutter by trade; but, like his kinsman the "Trunkmaker," he afterwards rose by force of industry to "the mystery of merchandizing," and became Alderman and eventually (in 1709) Mayor of Cambridge. The characters of the two claimants, indeed, showed a strong family likeness; and their fates might have been similar, but the younger man was deterred by the disastrous example of the elder from wasting his life and fortune in a profitless war against the power and privileges of those "in possession."

In 1681, therefore, Francis Percy came to London to consult the officials of the Heralds' College as to the possibilities of his being the true heir of Northumberland. He too could only trace as far as his grandfather, one Robert Percy (whom the "Trunkmaker" claimed to have

¹ Having been born at Bickley, county Devon, in 1649.

been his great-uncle). The tradition that this grandfather had been carried out of Northumberland during the troubles of a former reign was known to him ; but he also inherited a second tradition (which the "Trunkmaker" either did not know, or else chose to suppress), viz. that Robert Percy was a very near relative of Thomas Percy, one of the chief conspirators in the Gunpowder Treason. Sir William Dugdale received the new Claimant civilly, and finding that Thomas Percy had actually left children, one of whom was said to have been a Robert, advised Francis of Cambridge to claim the conspirator as his great-grandfather. But in examining the MS. books at his disposal for a clue to Thomas Percy's parentage, Dugdale was misled (doubtless by the same mutilated page which had puzzled his predecessor Walker) into making the fanatical constable of Alnwick the son of one who could not, in the nature of things, have left issue. In other words he set down Guiscard Percy, brother of the seventh and eighth Earls, as father of Thomas ; although Guiscard had actually died in early childhood.¹ We know to-day that the conspirator was son of Edward Percy of Beverley, and grandson of Josceline Percy of Newlands. Had either Francis or James Percy been able to discover as much, they might have saved themselves a world of trouble, and perhaps even succeeded in establishing a male heir of the old house in the place of his ancestors. At Dugdale's direction, Francis of Cambridge did as the "Trunkmaker" had done before him, journeying to most of the places where his forebears, real or imaginary, had resided, and collecting certificates from the parish registers, as well as statements from persons who had known them. This mass of evidence he deposited with Dugdale, who expressed himself as well pleased, and even confident of success. The "Stonecutter Claimant" returned to his shop in Cambridge, and waited, somewhat impatiently, while Garter King of Arms sifted the various proofs of descent. Several letters passed between him and Dugdale, but he heard nothing

¹ He was certainly not alive in 1537, when his father, Sir Thomas, was executed.

of any positive claim to the Earldom of Northumberland being put forward in his behalf. At length he wrote to the Garter King urging him to take immediate steps in this direction, and (sly stonecutter!) sending at the same time a present of some plump fowl from the famous Stourbridge Fair (where he had just set up a trading booth)¹—his first step in “merchandizing.”

The reply of Sir William Dugdale is thus quoted by Banks:²—

“SIR,—This is to let you know that this day I received your kinde present of fowle, for w^{ch} I return you my hearty thanks, but am not pleased that you have put yourself to the charge and trouble thereof, assuring you of my willingness to do you any service I can wthout expectance of any such thing from you; it being both just and reasonable that all generous minds should readily serve you in this business to their utmost.

“But as affairs stand at present in that noble family, I must tell you it will not be seasonable to move for you, the distractions and perplexities wherein all of them are,³ being so exceeding great. When I finde a proper opportunity, be confident I will not forget you. Should I move in it now, it would be the near way to spoyle it utterly. You must therefore expect wth patience, and be confident that you have not any acquaintance that will more cordially endeavour to serve you than

“Your very affectionate friend,

“W^m DUGDALE.

“LONDON, Nov. 28th, 1681.

“*For Mr. Francis Percy, stone-cutter,
at his house in Cambridge.*”

In this letter Dugdale, however, enclosed a written opinion upon the various certificates submitted, as well

¹ See his Will, p. 364.

² *Dormant and Extinct Baronage*; Appendix to vol. ii. (printed in the Supplement), p. 29.

³ Elizabeth, Baroness Percy, had just been married, against her will, and through the evil influence of her grandmother, to Thomas Thynn. Rumours

as a pedigree which he had drafted of the stonecutter's supposed line. The opinion (also given by Banks) is as follows :—

"Upon the sight of the certificates, whence I have made these brief abstracts, I am of opinion that Mr. Francis Percy, now living and residing in Cambridge, is lineally descended from Thomas Percy who was one of the Conspirators in the Gunpowder treason in the third year of King James. (Signed) "WILLIAM DUGDALE,

"*Garter Principall King of Arms.*

"Nov. 9, 1681."

Banks adds a note excusing himself from printing copies of the certificates alluded to, on the ground that the registers from which they are mainly taken are of "a pervertible nature," and that such evidence might be "suppressed or removed by interested parties." Later antiquaries, however, have shown themselves more trustful of the honour of those who succeeded to the ancient Percy heritage; and in *Collectanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, vol. ii.,¹ may be found the full abstract made by Sir William Dugdale from the evidence gathered by Francis Percy. The abstract shows the hand of a practised genealogist, and the facts are marshalled with an order and a plausibility in striking contrast to the ill-arranged and rambling statements of the less fortunate "Trunkmaker." The three distinguished authorities who are responsible for the authenticity of the published version² explain that the original abstract passed from the descendants of Francis Percy to the Rev. William

were afloat that Thynn had committed bigamy, and his wife had fled from him almost at the altar steps, and taken refuge in Holland. She was supported by her mother, and by her aunt and uncle the Earl and Countess of Essex; while the old Dowager Countess still continued to receive and encourage Thynn, who was presently to meet a bloody death at the instigation of one of his wife's admirers. The persistency of the "Trunkmaker" also added to the "noble family's" perplexities.

¹ Pages 57-63.

² These are "Robert Surtees, F.S.A., the historian of Durham; Charles George Young, F.S.A., York Herald; and the Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A., the historian of South Yorkshire."—*Collect. Gen. et Her.*

Cole, the Cambridge archæologist,¹ in whose MSS. Collections² it was found. It runs as follows :—

"Abstract drawn up by Sir W^m Dugdale, proving Mr. Francis Percy, now of Cambridge, to be of the line and family of the Percys, Earls of Northumberland.

"Sept. 6, 1680.—Roger England of Taunton in Somersetshire, aged 80 years, certifieth that he married Anne daughter of Robert, son of Thomas the Powder Traytor, and has heard the said Robert, his wife's father, say that he was son to Thomas Percy, who was employed in the Powder Plot.

"Oct. 11, 1680.—John Swinton, clerk of ye parish Church of Anwick in Northumberland, aged above 80 years, affirmeth that he heard his father say that M^r Thomas Percy and his wife lived in the Castle at Anwick and had children, and y^t after the Powder Plot for wh^{ch} ye said Thomas lost his life, his wife went to London and lived privately there.³

"Oct. 14, 1680.—Matthew Scott of Gateshead in the Bishoprick of Durham, aged 99 years, certifieth that he knew Thomas Percy, who was afterwards in the Powder Plot, Constable of Anwick Castle, and that he had a son called Robert and two daughters, and that the said Robert was a schoolboy at Anwick.

"Feb. 12, 1680.—Richard (sic) widow of Francis Percy, son of Robert aforesaid, aged 76 years, sayeth that she knew the said Robert Percy, her late husband's father, and has often heard him say that he was the son of Thomas Percy who was in the Powder Plot: and that, above 16 years since, ye said Francis, her late husband, purposing

¹ Cole observes that he had the MS. from "Mr. Percy, a clergyman near Peterborough." This was the Rev. Josceline Percy, grandson of Francis Percy the "stone-cutter." With the MS. Mr. Percy gave Cole an old account of the Earls of Northumberland from York's *Mirror of Honour*, bearing the autograph of the "stone-cutter."

² Vol. iv. p. 79.

³ It is a known fact that she kept a dame's school in High Holborn for many years.

to make himself known to Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, went from Bickley in Devonshire, where he then lived, towards London for that end, but, on his way falling sick at Oxford, returned home, where he shortly after died.

"From the Register Book of Anwick, it appeareth that Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Percy of Anwick Castle, was buried February 2nd, 1602, which was the year preceding the Powder Plot.

"By a certificate of the 17 September 1680, taken out of the Church Register of Wiveliscomb, Somerset, it appeareth that Robert Percy did marry Emma Meade 22 Oct. 1615.

"By a certificate of ye 10 May 1680, taken out of ye Church Register of Taunton in Somerset, it appeareth that Francis ye son of Robert Percy was there baptized 15 April 1616.

"Out of ye register of the parish church of Bickley in Devonshire it appeareth that Francis son of Francis Percy was baptized 15 May 1649.

"It is apparently known in Taunton that Thomas and James, two brothers of Francis Percy, and sons of Robert Percy, being in arms for King Charles I. in ye time of ye late Rebellion, were slain in those wars.

"Divers aged persons living in Anwick declare that Thomas Percy, who was in the Powder Plot, was son of Guiscard Percy, and that Guiscard Percy was brother to Henry, eighth Earl of Northumberland.

"*Guiscard Percy*, a younger brother of Henry, 8 Earl of Northumberland;

"*Thomas Percy*, one of ye conspirators in the Powder Plot, his son;

"*Robert Percy*, of Taunton in Somerset, his son;

"*Francis Percy*, of Bickley in Devon, his son;

"*Francis Percy*, of Cambridge, his son, 1681.

"Upon sight of these certificates whence I have made these brief abstracts, I am of opinion that Mr. Francis

Percy, now living in Cambridge, is lineally descended from Thomas Percy who was one of ye Conspirators in ye Gunpowder Treason in ye third year of King James.

(Signed) "WILLIAM DUGDALE,
"Garter Principal King of Arms."

"Nov. 9, 1681."

The veracity of the Alnwick witnesses seems to be decidedly impugned by the fact that they claimed Thomas Percy, the conspirator, to have been a son of Guiscard Percy. This he certainly was not, for ;

1. Guiscard Percy died in childhood.

2. Thomas Percy is admitted to have been uncle of Josceline Percy, son of Alan Percy of Beverley, which Alan was found by Inquisition to have been son and heir of Edward Percy, esquire, of Beverley, who died in 1590. The proof that Thomas was uncle of Josceline is found in the latter's own evidence, given before the Council in 1603, when it was to his own interest to disavow the relationship.¹

The reader's attention is also directed to the fact that if Robert Percy of Taunton were indeed the son of the conspirator, and a schoolboy at Alnwick just before the Gunpowder Plot, he must have married and had children at an unusually early age—his eldest son, Robert, having been baptized in April 1616. It is also strange that he retained his own name, his alleged mother (Thomas Percy's widow) having changed hers after her husband's death,² when she brought her young family to London.

In the face of Francis Percy's claim of descent from the conspirator, it must be remembered that the other claimant, the "Trunkmaker," had first brought Francis into notice some years before, by describing him as his cousin. Soon after it became known that the "Stonecutter" intended to

¹ Josceline Percy admitted that he was playing at *primero* with other pages of the Earl at Essex House on the night preceding the momentous 5th of November 1603, when his uncle Thomas the conspirator called upon him (Singer ; *Treatise on Cards* ; quoting an *Orig. State Paper* in the Record Office).

² *Dict. of Nat. Biography*.

make a claim on his own account, James Percy wrote to his kinsman in terms which have in them so much of quiet certainty, and which mention the names of so many relatives *in the male line* (some of them living, and able to bear witness at the time), that one is led to doubt the hearsay evidence of Roger England and the others to the effect that Robert Percy of Taunton was son of Thomas the conspirator. The letter, quoted by Banks, is here reproduced :—

"LONDON, *April* 3, 1688.

"COZEN FRANCIS PERCY,—As myne adversaries would have owned thee, and have endeavoured with ye heralds to deny mee, even so my endeavoures are y^t Gods truth should bee manifest and made knoune to the world, y^t property and right might bee preserved amongst men. My Ffather was Henry Percy of Horton in Northamptonshire, who was second son of Henry Percy of Pavenham in Bedfordshire, who was first son of Sir Ingelgram Percy, third son of Henry Percy, fifth Earl of Northumberland : and your Ffather was Ffrancis Percy the sonne of Thomas Percy, who was sonne of Robert Percy, second son of Sir Ingelgram Percy.

"Notwithstanding Sir William Dugdale, principall king at Armes, in his letter to you to clayme under Guiscard Percy, ye sonne of Sir Thomas, who was found S.P. in those books of Heraldry in Caius College, Cambridge ; but there is one Roger Percy, who was ye sonne of Henry Percy, who was the sonne of Richard Percy, who was the sonne of Robert Percy, second sonne of Sir Ingelgram Percy, who sent those two sonnes and two daughters in Hampires : Anne¹ married Eson a miller in Cooknoo² in

¹ Evidently one of the four children brought from the North, and sister of Henry and Robert.

² Cucknoe, *recte* Cogenhoe, is a parish in Wymmersley Hundred, in the south of Northants. It includes a district known as Cogenhoe Brace, seven miles away, and adjoining the parish of Horton, in which the Trunkmaker's father married and resided for a time. The register of Cogenhoe begins in 1558. The Rev. Peter Whalley (perhaps a relative of Nathaniel Whalley, Lady Northumberland's Yorkshire agent) was incumbent and patron from 1656 to 1700.

Northamptonshire ; and Elenor married and had a daughter Mary, grand-daughter of Sir Ingelgram, who is yet living aged 85 : but whether Thomas your grandfather, or Richard his grandfather was the eldest, I cannot tell. I believe the Register of Cooknoo in Northamptonshire will inform you ; Sir Robert Percy¹ with your grandfather lived in ye tounne, as I have been informed. I have given you this reall account that, as I have been owned by Henry 9th Earl, Algernoone 10th Earl, Henry Lord Percy his brother, and Joceline 11th Earl, even so I owne you two² to bee ye next heire-males to ye Percy, if it should please God my issue males should dye ; therefore my desire is that you would both bee at my tryall and enter yourselves in the Heralds office before I dye, to prevent those troubles I have undergone.

"I remaine,

"Your Ffaithful Kinsman,

"JAMES PERCY.

"*These to Mr. Francis Percy
in Cambridge, P. sent.*"

In commenting upon this letter (which, be it remembered, was the composition of a man of almost seventy, worn out by a long succession of trials and disappointments), Banks justly observes : "Under these representations there is some ground to believe that James Percy was not so exactly an impostor as has been asserted by Mr. Collins ; but that through the hand of power he failed, like many others who are friendless and penniless, from having justice done to his pretensions."³

It is worth noting that, whether the letter of James Percy had any influence upon his actions, or whether Dugdale advised him that his case was hopeless, Francis Percy ceased during the following year (1689) to further

¹ Meaning his own grand-uncle, Robert Percy.

² *i.e.* Francis of Cambridge, and the Roger Percy his cousin mentioned above, who was a shoemaker at Charing Cross, and probably well known to the "Trunk-maker."

³ *Extinct Baronage* ; Appendix to vol. ii. p. 32.

agitate his claim to the Earldom of Northumberland. In the city of Cambridge he increased in wealth and dignity, becoming Alderman and Mayor of that place. He died on May 6, 1717; and his will (dated March 26, 1716, proved June 20, 1717) was summarised as follows: "The Will of Francis Percy of Cambridge, esquire. He bequeathes to his son Charles, and to his daughter Elizabeth, the wife of Dr. Perkins, all his freehold estate in the town of Cambridge, in equal shares. To his said daughter, Elizabeth, with remainder to his son Charles, the first of his three booths in Sturbridge Fair. To his daughter Margaret Trevor with remainder to his son Charles, the second of his said booths. To his son Charles, the third booth unreservedly. To his daughter Margaret Trevor £200. To his daughter Anne, wife of Mr. Henry Crispe, clerk, £6 yearly. Small bequests to his niece, Mary Percy;¹ to his son, Francis Percy; and to his daughter Burge. The residue to Charles Percy."² The testator's eldest son, Charles, was a Common Councillor of Cambridge, and died in 1743, leaving a son, the Rev. Josceline Percy, M.A., Rector of Marham in Northamptonshire, who died without male issue. For the rest of Francis Percy's known descendants (now believed to be extinct in the male line) the reader is referred to the Genealogy of the House of Percy, Table III., in this work.

Meanwhile James Percy, the "Trunkmaker," had lingered on in London, enduring the direst poverty, and unable for that reason to take any further legal steps to regain what he obstinately and honestly held to be his rights.. His sons in Ireland sent him only enough to live upon in the most sparing manner, confident that any further efforts of his to claim the Earldom would be useless. But if they hoped in this manner to induce him to abandon his vain hopes and return home, they were disappointed. In spite of his

The last of
James Percy
of Dublin.

¹ Probably daughter of that tailor brother of whom James Percy spoke.

² *Prob. C. Camb.*, 124 Fox.

weight of years and sorrows, the "Trunkmaker" was resolved to fight the battle to the last. The next important stroke, however, was destined to come from his opponents. Elizabeth, Baroness Percy, had married, as her third husband, the Duke of Somerset, a man of whom it was truly said that his pride of rank was so great that it partook of the nature of a mania. To one of Somerset's character, the very thought that the "Trunkmaker" still asserted his claims in public places, and even dared to call himself the "true heir of Northumberland," proved galling beyond endurance. He resolved to put an end to what seemed to him almost *lesè majesté*. Accordingly, when the first Parliament of James II assembled,¹ a memorial was presented to the House of Lords from Charles Duke of Somerset and Elizabeth his wife, complaining that James Percy "continued falsely to assume the title of Earl of Northumberland," and praying for interference. This document was duly read on Monday, June 1, and referred to the Committee on Privileges. Percy heard of the matter, and lost little time in replying, "for as a Percy, he held himself as good as any Seymour whose ancestors, these less than two hundred years past, had jumped into place and honour by the help of a King's chance love." On June 12, a packet of papers was found upon the table of the House of Lords thus superscribed—

"Percy's Petition of Complaint; and the two Petitions that were wanting are annexed, humbly praying that they may be read; and he shall ever pray. Equal Justice do, or tell the Reason Why."

The packet was not opened; but, its nature being understood, was despatched forthwith to the Committee on Privileges with instructions to examine and report upon the contents at the same time as upon the Duke of Somerset's memorial. Within a week Parliament adjourned, and only sat for a few days during the following November. There is no record that the Committee on Privileges made any report, and the matter was apparently neglected. To the

¹ On May 25, 1685.

Parliament which met (or rather which reorganised itself)¹ immediately after the Revolution, Percy again applied; addressing a second "Petition of Complaint" to the House of Lords. As in the former case, his appeal was referred to the Committee on Privileges. On May 28 this Committee sent back its report through the Earl of Bridgewater. It proved to be of a most hostile character, and recommended that no countenance whatsoever should be given to the petitioner; but that, on the contrary, a day should be appointed to consult as to the propriety of taking proceedings against him. The Committee also held that Percy's "presumption in styling himself right and lawful Earl of Northumberland" was "insolent and injurious" to the House. "Besides," continued Bridgewater, "there are several scandalous reflections therein on the Duke and Duchess of Somerset, which their lordships leave to the censure of the House." On this the Lords appointed Tuesday, June 11, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, for the hearing of counsel on the part of the Duke of Somerset, and of James Percy. The hearing probably took place, but as it was over before noon on the same day, Percy could not have had much opportunity to plead his cause, and it is certain that no witnesses were examined on either side. There was no Anglesey to demand a fair hearing for the aged and friendless "Trunkmaker"; and the House of Lords resolved without debate that his pretensions were "groundless, false, and scandalous." His Petition of Complaint was therefore dismissed; and it was ordered that he himself "should be brought before the Four Courts in Westminster Hall, wearing upon his breast a paper having writ on it "The False and Impudent Pretender to the Earldom of Northumberland," for which punishment the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was "authorised to attach his person forthwith."²

¹ This Parliament had originally been only a Convention, but was converted into a Parliament (as many thought illegally) by a Bill passed through both Houses, and assented to by William and Mary on February 23, 1689.

² *Journals of the House of Lords.*

It is probable that Percy succeeded in escaping before he could be seized, or else that on account of his age—he was now threescore and ten—the sentence was subsequently remitted. There is no record, at least, that his punishment ever took place. He disappeared from London, his stubborn spirit utterly crushed by the collapse of all his hopes. Perhaps Dublin was his place of refuge; but the very time and place of his death remain uncertain. It will always remain a blot upon the fame of the Dowager Countess of Northumberland and her agents, that he was not allowed a fair hearing during the first ten years of his struggle. Indeed the very facts that he was so evidently hampered and harassed by the Countess, and that it was thought necessary to appeal to Privilege in order to prevent his cases from coming to trial, must necessarily continue to afford a suspicion that there was something in the claims of James Percy after all. To quote the verdict of Craik upon the subject: "His case can hardly be said to be satisfactorily disposed of, so long as his true descent remains unascertained."¹

His eldest son, Sir Anthony Percy, became Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1699, and was knighted at the close of his term of office. A grandson, Henry Percy of Seskin, co. Wicklow, at one time published a pamphlet, now very rare, in which he reviewed and renewed James Percy's claim to the Earldom. This branch is now supposed to be extinct in the male line. But the Claimant's two younger sons also left descendants. One of them, John Percy of Ballintemple, King's County, was granted by Sir William Betham, Ulster King of Arms, the following armorial bearings in evident recognition of Percy's claimed descent from the House of Northumberland:—"Quarterly, 1st and 4th, or a lion rampant *azure* between 3 trefoils slipped *vert*; 2nd and 3rd, *azure* 5 fusils in fesse or between 2 trefoils slipped *argent*; all within a border

¹ *Romance of the Peerage.*

gobony *gules* and *argent*." ¹ Among the descendants of the "Trunkmaker" in the female line may be counted the Right Hon. Lord Oranmore and Browne, and Sir Thomas Pierce Butler, tenth Bart., of Garryhundon, co. Carlow.

While James Percy, the "Trunkmaker," and Francis of Cambridge were waging an unequal warfare against the Dowager Countess, confident of the justice of their claims, yet unable to prove their ancestry beyond the second generation, there dwelt in England a certain country gentleman who could show a clear and undeniable descent from the House of Percy, and who, in the minds of such careful antiquaries as Surtees, Hunter, and Young, was entitled, after the decease of Earl Josceline, to call himself twelfth EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND. This was Alan Percy of Beverley, whom the "Trunkmaker" quite correctly described as "a descendant of the fourth Earl."

There was no question of a missing great-grandfather in Alan Percy's case, nor did any portion of his family history rest upon the uncertain basis of mere tradition. Every step in his line of descent can be proved with minute accuracy. Why he did not assert his claims, or why the heralds (of whom Dugdale, at least, was as disinterested as he was zealous) did not call attention to them, can only be explained upon the alternative suppositions (1) that Percy and the heralds were alike ignorant of the true value of the former's admitted relationship to the senior stock of Northumberland, or (2) that the vague assertions of James Percy were secretly known to be correct. In any case, the claims of the "Trunkmaker" and his branch having been set aside, no apparent obstacle stood between Mr. Percy of Beverley and the

¹ From this John Percy claim descent George Percy of Ballylonan, near Frankford, King's County, and John Percy of Clononeen, Borris-in-Ossory, Queen's County, either of whom may be the male representative of old James Percy, the "Trunkmaker," and his claims. A Henry Percy also resides at Larkfield, near Athlone, and claims to be a descendant of James Percy.

Earldom. For not even the brazen Dowager Countess, or her agents Gee and Champion, could deny that the Yorkshire squire was a legitimate male relative of Earl Josceline. Add to this that his blood was unaffected by the attainder of 1537, and it will be seen that, had he actually succeeded, it would have been to *the ancient Earldom of 1377*, and not to that created anew in the reign of Queen Mary.

Alan Percy of Beverley, apparently twelfth Earl of Northumberland, sprang from Josceline Percy, fourth and youngest son of the fourth Earl. This Josceline inherited an estate called Newland or Newlands, as well as property in the town of Beverley. Earlier in this work¹ will be found an account of his having been poisoned by three of his servants, and of the fruitless endeavours of his brother Sir William Percy, K.B., to bring these miscreants to justice. Josceline had married Margaret Frost, daughter and heir of Walter Frost of Beverley.² At the time of his death, he was again contracted in marriage to Cecily Boynton. His will, which was never proved (owing to the fact that his guilty domestics had stolen all his money and movable goods), is as follows:—

"Josselyn Percy of Newland, Esquier, 7 Sept. 1532: to be buried when God shall dispose.³ To Jennet my chief houswife at Newland, and other my women servants there, to praye for me, Xs.; to Amor Banastre, servant to my dearly beloved brother Sir William Percy, taking paynes with me, one horse; to Katherin Retcliff, gentlewoman to my sister-in-law, one cowe; to Ann Cotton, my wives gentlewoman, 6s. 8d.; to my dearly beloved sister Dame Margaret Percy, wife of my brother, Sir Wm. Percy, to pray for me, 6s. 8d.; My brother Sir W^m Percy, and my dearly beloved contracted wife Cecily Boynton, the late wife of Thomas Boynton, Esquier, my Executors. Witnesses:—Stephen Con-

¹ *i.e.* at pp. 217, 218, vol. i.

² Whose will bears date 1528.

³ He was actually interred in the Church of Great Sandal, where a tomb stands to his memory.

stable, Esquier; Robert Pemmerton, servant to Sir W^m Ayscough.—(*Nulla probatus inseritur.*)" The expression "*taking pains with me*" may allude to efforts made to resuscitate the testator after he had been poisoned and left for dead. No mention is made here of Josceline's children by his deceased wife; yet we know that he had at least one—Surtees says *two*¹—sons by her. In the will of her father, Walter Frost, mention is made of his grandson and future heir Edward Percy. At the period of his father's death, September 8, 1532, Edward Percy was nine years of age. He had no doubt been carried off, with his father's money and movable gear, by the poisoners Snawdell and West, when they fled from Newlands to Walton Hall, and took refuge with Sir Thomas Waterton.² We have seen that, young as he was, Edward Percy was already "married" to Elizabeth Waterton.³ This lady was probably as youthful as he. Her father, Sir Thomas of Walton, had but recently succeeded to the ancient patrimony of the family—now unhappily alienated;⁴ and Elizabeth was his youngest child. It is unknown whether Sir William Percy succeeded in securing the wardship of his nephew, or whether the latter grew up at Walton Hall. An Edward Percy, probably the same, was admitted at Gray's Inn in 1544. He eventually succeeded to his mother's and to a remnant of his father's property, and died September 22, 1590. According to an Inquisition taken after his decease, his "son and successor, Alan Percy, Esquire, of Beverley," was "aged thirty years and unmarried" in 1590. The facts that Alan is described as "son and successor," not as "son and heir," and that his birth did not occur until 1560—*i.e. fifteen years after his father and mother might reasonably be supposed to have*

¹ Surtees gives Josceline Percy another son, William by name, of whom he furnishes no further particulars (Pedigree in *Collectanea Top. et Her.*, vol. ii.).

² See *ante*, vol. i. p. 217.

³ "A sorry bargain, his blood considered," wrote his uncle Sir William, to Cromwell (see *ante*, as above).

⁴ Walton Hall was sold by the late Edmund Waterton, Esq., to the Simpson family. His son resides at Deeping Waterton, county Lincoln.

consummated their early marriage—lend possibility to the theory that Edward and Elizabeth Percy had children born before Alan, and that these children were the traditional "Four Percies" sent south in 1559 to Lady Vaux of Harrowden.

Be this as it may, Edward Percy died without a will, and Alan, one of his sons, succeeded. He left another son, viz. Thomas Percy, the Gunpowder Plot conspirator; as well as two daughters.¹ Alan of Beverley married Mary, daughter of Robert Moore of Beswicke in Holder-nesse, and was Member of Parliament for Beverley from 1599 until 1603, when he retired in consequence of the evil notoriety brought upon him by his brother's misdeeds. The remainder of his life was spent in seclusion, and he died June 24, 1632,² leaving two surviving sons,³ and one daughter, Frances, married to James Ellerker, son of John Ellerker, Esquire, of Risby in Yorkshire. The second surviving son, Edward Percy, was in the employment of his cousin, the Earl of Northumberland, and died at Petworth, August 20, 1630, at the age of thirty-two, presumably unmarried (although this is by no means certain). Josceline Percy, the elder surviving son, was a page in the same Earl's service at the period of the Gunpowder Treason; and we read that he was playing primero with other pages at Essex House on Nov. 4, 1603, when his uncle, Thomas Percy, called upon him.⁴ He succeeded to the estate at Beverley, and married Elizabeth, daughter of William Fitz-William of Mapletorpe; but towards the close of his life he resided in London, and it was as an inhabitant of the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, that he executed his last will, September 30, 1652.⁵ He left issue two surviving

¹ See *Genealogy*, Table III.

² Both Alan Percy, M.P., and his father Edward are buried in St. Mary's Church, Beverley.

³ According to the registers of St. Mary's, Alan Percy had four other sons and two daughters, all of whom died young (see *Genealogy*, Table III.).

⁴ *Original State Papers*, quoted by Singer in his *Treatise on Cards*.

⁵ Probate June 4, 1653.

sons¹ and one daughter, Eleanor, married to William Ferrand of Westhall, county York. The elder son was Alan Percy of Beverley, probable male heir of his cousin Josceline, eleventh Earl of Northumberland. The second was Charles Percy, a beneficiary under his father's will in 1652. Of this individual nothing further has as yet been discovered. He is not mentioned in his brother's will, and it is therefore assumed by Messrs. Surtees, Hunter, and Young that he died before 1652, without issue. But too much importance must not be attached to the fact of the omission of his name from the document in question. His own great-grandfather, Edward Percy, was not even alluded to in the will of the latter's father; and some unknown reasons may have similarly induced Alan Percy to overlook his brother Charles. As to Alan of Beverley (or, as some term him, Alan, twelfth Earl of Northumberland), he never married, and died at Lincoln about midsummer 1687. In his last will, dated 1686 but not proved until November 23, 1692, he bequeathed his estate to his sister, Mrs. Ferrand (who died *s.p.*), and after her to his friend John Thorpe. With his death the heirship of Northumberland fell once more into doubt; nor was there any known person then living who could, like Alan Percy of Beverley, show an *indisputable* descent in the male line from the ancient Earls of the House of Percy. But now that parish registers, wills, deeds, and the like are being searched with a thoroughness and a disinterestedness unknown to the antiquaries of past generations, it is by no means impossible that a male heir of Northumberland may, even at this late day, succeed in proving his claim to the dormant Earldom of 1377.

¹ A third son, John Percy, was buried 1634 at Beverley. In the register of St. James's, Clerkenwell, under date of July 1, 1664, is recorded the marriage of a Josceline Percy to Mary Phillips. This Josceline, however, may be one of the sons (so christened, as we are told) of William Percy, half-brother of the "Trunkmaker."

VI

NO sooner had the marriage of the younger Lady Northumberland to Mr. Montagu been made public than the Dowager Countess (who hated and despised her beautiful daughter-in-law) set about putting the provisions of Earl Josceline's will into force.¹ She went in state, with her bodyguard of footmen, to Northumberland House,² of which she took formal possession in the name of her grandchild; and the agents at Syon, Petworth, and the northern estates were at once notified that henceforward they must look to their late master's mother, and not to his widow, for their orders. But the Dowager, covetous and fond of power as she was, really cared less for the management of the great Northumberland estates than she did for the opportunity, given to her under the Earl's will, of supplanting the young Countess as sole guardian of Lady Elizabeth Percy. In this cruel separation of mother and child she saw, not only an exquisite chance to vent her spite against the former, but also a prospect of profitable match-making by-and-by, when the latter should reach what was then deemed a suitable age for matrimonial contracts. Had Earl Josceline been able to foresee how his mother would carry out the trust which he imposed on her, he might well have chosen to leave his infant heiress to the care of Montagu's wife (her natural protectress) rather than to that of the "hard,

¹ The will provided that in case the testator's widow should marry again, the guardianship of their daughter and the control of the Percy estates were to pass to the Dowager Countess, Lady Northumberland only retaining her own fortune and dower.

² Northumberland House, in a sense, came into the Percy family through the Dowager Countess, but it must not be forgotten that Earl Algernon paid a large sum to his wife's relatives for the transfer.

grasping, and, if we may believe contemporary accounts, unscrupulous"¹ Dowager. Young Lady Northumberland pleaded that her daughter might at least be left to her for another twelvemonth—the child was now only in her seventh year²; but the Dowager refused even to concede this small mercy, and demanded by letter that Lady Elizabeth Percy should be sent immediately to Suffolk House.³ Again the younger Countess wrote, asking for an interview, or a family council, at which Lord Essex and his wife might be present. This was also declined in peremptory terms; for the Dowager guessed—probably correctly—that her stepdaughter and the latter's husband would side against her in the matter.⁴ She threatened, in case her demands were not complied with, to appeal to the law, which was of course in her favour. But the younger Countess resolved not to give up Lady Elizabeth without a struggle, and accordingly left this innocent cause of so much heart-burning to her old friend Dr. Mapleton, with instructions that she should be carefully guarded. Mapleton fulfilled his trust well, and sent weekly bulletins concerning the child's health to her mother. In reply to one of his letters, we find Lady Northumberland writing: "*I am very glad the deare child is soe well. . . . I leave her wholly to your care to remove her when you thinke fitt, and I desire that you would stay to come with her; for I shall not be at ease if you are not with her. And pray take care to defend her from her grandmother, who has not so much civilitie left as to come and speake to me her selfe; but by a letter has lett me know that she does expect to have her delivered up; if not she must use force. Poore childe! Pray God send her*

¹ Thus De Fonblanque, who may almost be regarded as the official chronicler of the Dowager's descendants.

² Lady Elizabeth Percy, now Baroness Percy (by writ of 1625) had been born on Jan. 26, 1667.

³ Although the Dowager had seized upon Northumberland House, she continued for some time longer to live at Suffolk House.

⁴ Lord and Lady Essex were, as a matter of fact, no friends of the old Countess; and bitterly resented the manner in which she reared their niece.

health, and protect her from all the designs that are upon her at this time !"

It is not known if the Dowager Countess was actually compelled to "use force" to gain her ends. Perhaps the prudent Mapletoft, seeing her so determined, advised his patroness to surrender in the interests of little Lady Elizabeth; perhaps Montagu took this course out of a desire to avoid scandal and legal strife. At all events the Dowager carried the day, and the heiress of the Percies was eventually placed under her control in accordance with the will of Earl Josceline. When mother and daughter met again, it was almost as strangers. Lady Northumberland had lived much abroad, and other offspring, Montagu's children, had come to wean her affections from the once dearly loved Elizabeth. The latter, on her side, was fresh from the cynical, selfish school of her grandmother, the Dowager, wherein, during many years, she had only heard her surviving parent spoken of with aversion and contempt. So that when my Lord Montagu's wife met my Lady Northumberland's daughter, they probably exchanged curtseys (great dames rarely embraced, lest the armour of Venus should suffer by the contact) and wished each other well in the politest but least natural fashion imaginable.

The social education of Lady Elizabeth was undertaken wholly by the Dowager Countess, who laboured, happily with but slight success, to make her ward a youthful copy of herself. As to her literary training, our information is confined to the knowledge that she spoke French colloquially, and spelt English as well as most women of her rank and time. She had little leisure for scholarship, in fact, for before she had reached her twelfth year the Dowager Countess was already in treaty to find her a husband. This sort of intrigue was dear to the heart of Earl Algernon's widow. She "had a passion for social power, for money, and for match-making."¹ Moreover her keen eyes detected in Lady Elizabeth's nature a certain

¹ De Fonblanque.

growing wilfulness, inherited from her paternal ancestors, which might develop into obstinacy and rebellion, unless promptly subjugated. The Dowager felt that if she was to choose a husband for her grandchild, she must choose without delay. In the winter of 1678, therefore, she commissioned her brother, Lord Suffolk¹ to open negotiations with the Marquis of Winchester² "in regard to an alliance between the Houses of Percy and Powlett." Lord Winchester may have had other plans for the settlement of his son and heir; or he may not have cared to entertain the conditions offered, which included the sinking of the name of Paulet in that of Percy, and the continuation of the Dowager Countess as comptroller of the Northumberland estates until Lady Elizabeth reached the age of eighteen. He certainly declined the proffered honour on his son's behalf, and the negotiations fell through. Less than a month passed by, however, before another match presented itself, and a suitor appeared whose origin has been quaintly described as "basely illustrious." In this case there need be no difficulty as to the question of surname, for, truth to tell, the proposed bridegroom had no proper patronymic of his own. In short, his Majesty King Charles II. formally proposed for the hand of Lady Elizabeth Percy, on behalf of his natural son George Fitz-Roy, recently created Earl of Northumberland.³ This sprig of Royalty was the third son of Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, and there seems to have been less doubt regarding his paternity than existed in the cases of his elder brothers.⁴ It was an ingenious and economical plan on the King's part to obtain for his illegitimate offspring the hands of great heiresses, thereby obviating the necessity of large grants

¹ This was James, third Earl of Suffolk, K.B., who died in 1688.

² Charles Paulet or Powlett, sixth Marquis of Winchester, afterwards first Duke of Bolton. His son, to whom Lady Northumberland desired to marry her ward, was Charles, second Duke, K.G., and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

³ He was so created on October 1, 1674, his other titles being Viscount Falmouth and Baron of Pontefract.

⁴ The Dukes of Southampton and Grafton, the latter ancestor of the present Duke.

from the Crown to these numerous *princes à la main gauche*. The Duke of Monmouth, for instance, had been married to the female representative of the great House of Buccleugh, and it had long been a project of Charles to see George Fitz-Roy the husband of Lady Elizabeth Percy. It was, indeed, with an eye to this result that he had raised Fitz-Roy to the Earldom of Northumberland, scarcely a courteous proceeding under the circumstances. It must be owned that, in regard to personal characteristics, the young Earl was perhaps the most deserving of all those whose names were at one time or another mentioned as possible consorts of Lady Elizabeth. "Of all His Majesty's children," wrote Evelyn, "this seemed the most accomplished and worth the owning. He is extraordinarily handsome and well-shaped."¹

Charles himself wrote to the Dowager Countess in the following terms :—

"WHIT HALL, 10 Feb. 1679.

"Madame,

"As long as your grandchilde, my Lady Percy, was under age, or yourselfe engaged in a treaty for her, I refrained from any application to you, for my son George, both to assure you that I neither desired to precipitate a concern of so greate consequence to you, and to confirme you in my beleafe that I intend not to insiste upon unequal propositions; I understand that the treaty that was on foote for the Marquis of Winchesters son (when you writ to my L^d. Suffolke) is at an end, I hope that my modesty in staying to see the issue of that will now engage you not to treat with any other, till first you know what I shall offer; my earnestnesse for this, is, that (besides my inclination to oblige your family) your civillite to me in this affair, will give me more frequent opportunity particularly to serve you, which I assure you is the real desire of,

"Madame,

"Your affectionate friend,

"CHARLES R."²

¹ *Diary*; July 24, 1684.

² Holograph letter in the possession of Lord Leconfield.

In spite of this royal appeal, the Dowager Countess could not be brought to accept George Fitz-Roy as the husband of her ward. No question of birth entered the negotiations; but the settlements which the King proposed to make upon his son were considered quite inadequate by Lady Northumberland. Charles was greatly in need of money at the time, and as the New Parliament had not yet assembled he could look for no help from that quarter. The Dowager, finding matters in this condition, promptly refused to pursue the affair further, and resumed her search for a suitor at once wealthy, well-connected, and not likely to interfere with her management of the Percy estates. Such a one she found in Henry, Earl of Ogle, son and heir of the Duke of Newcastle, to whom Lady Elizabeth Percy was duly married less than a month after Fitz-Roy's rejection—the bridegroom being fifteen years of age, and the bride barely twelve.

The King was naturally offended by the insulting manner in which his son's pretensions had been treated by the Dowager; but he could only avenge himself by bestowing the lapsed Percy estates upon Monmouth and others, and by making Fitz-Roy Duke of Northumberland,¹ a superior dignity which had been withheld from the Percy family.

In all England, the Dowager Countess could have found few persons of title less suitable to match with her grandchild, or more likely to prove amenable to her own selfish designs, than the poor creature who now went through the mockery of a marriage with Lady Elizabeth Percy. That she procured such an alliance at all shows plainly enough the character of the woman, and the little regard which she entertained for the honour or dignity of the house into which she had married. Henry Cavendish,

Elizabeth
Percy loses
one husband
by death;
and flies in
disgust from
a second.

¹ On April 6, 1683, the Duke married Katherine, daughter of Thomas Wheatley of Brecknock, co. Bedford, and widow of Thomas Lucy of Charlecote. He died *s.p.* in 1716.

Lord Ogle, was a sickly boy of appalling ugliness, certainly weak-minded, if not, indeed, an absolute idiot. His sister was the hapless lunatic, Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, who was permitted by the lax laws of the time to marry the Duke of Montagu, though she fortunately bore him no children. The other relatives of Elizabeth Percy were astonished by the choice which her reckless guardian had made for the child, and did not hesitate to express their opinions on the subject. The still beautiful "Saccharissa" (now herself a Dowager Countess¹), wrote to her brother, Algernon Sidney, in the following emphatic terms :—

*"My Lord Ogle does prove the saddest Creature of all kinds that could have been found fit to be named for my Lady Percy; as ugly as anything young could be."*²

In accordance with the marriage agreement drawn up by the tyrannical Lady Northumberland, Ogle abandoned absolutely his patronymic of Cavendish, and took instead that of Percy; his father, the second Duke of Newcastle, settling at the same time a considerable jointure upon Lady Ogle. It was well for the latter that her tender years prevented this disgraceful marriage from being more than nominal. As a matter of fact she never saw her husband save at the altar. It was arranged that they should part for two years, and the bridegroom was sent upon his travels. He died abroad about six months later,³ leaving Elizabeth Percy a widow in her thirteenth year.

To the Dowager of Northumberland, the death of this poor lad meant a large addition to the fortune under her control, and the chance of still further increasing the same by a second wealthy match. Through the influence of the Duke of Monmouth she was led to accept as husband for her grandchild a commoner of very large fortune, Mr. Thomas Thynn, of Longleat in Wiltshire. Thynn, better

¹ Of Sunderland.

² *State Papers*; March 12, 1679.

³ On November 17, 1679. His death is ascribed to "premature decay."

known by his nickname of "Tom of Ten Thousand," was closely associated with Monmouth; and has been immortalised by Dryden as "wise Issachar," the "wealthy Western Friend" of the Protestant prince.¹ As to his wisdom little is known; but he was certainly one of the handsomest, as well as one of the richest men of his day. His family name, which is supposed to have been anciently Boteville, was (we are told) changed to "Th' Inn," and eventually corrupted to "Thinn" or "Thynn," because one of his ancestors, a certain "John o' th' Inn," either kept a hostelry or belonged to one of the Inns of Court.² Whatever credence may be attached to this derivation, it is certain that the Thynns had, for some generations, enjoyed knightly rank and large possessions in the West Country.³ Rightly or wrongly, "Tom of Ten Thousand" was accused of a profligacy remarkable even in that age of libertines: but the character which he bore by no means prevented the Dowager Countess from giving him her grandchild in marriage. The wedding was secret, and attended by many strange circumstances. As we shall see, its legality was disputed; and there were not wanting those who asserted that it had never taken place at all. But there is proof that a ceremony of a binding nature was actually performed, in the fact that Thynn's heir, Lord Weymouth, continued to pay Elizabeth Percy an annual sum, by way of dower, even after she became Duchess of Somerset, and acknowledged over his own signature that she owned a life interest in the Thynn estates.⁴ Moreover, there is a case upon record which establishes the marriage, while at the same time it sheds a curious light upon the system of bribery by which

¹ See *Absalom and Achitophel*.

² Botfield; *Stemmata Botteuilliana*, 1858.

³ Thomas Thynn himself was grandson of Sir Thomas Thynn, knt., of Longleat, and son of another Sir Thomas Thynn by Stuart, daughter and co-heir of Dr. Walter Balquanquill, Dean of Durham. After his death, Longleat passed to his cousin, Sir Thomas Thynn, who became first Viscount Weymouth, and was ancestor of the present Marquis of Bath.

⁴ Letters of Sir T. Thynn from Longleat, Sept. 23, 1682 (quoted by De Fonblanque from *Alnwick MSS.*)

it was brought about. In 1687 a certain Potter took an action against the executors of Thomas Thynn. Thynn, it seemed, had given Potter's wife and the plaintiff himself a written undertaking, "under penalty of £1000, to pay them £500 within ten days after his marriage" with Lady Ogle; "the said £500 being a reward for the part which Mistress Potter had taken in forwarding the match." After Thynn's death, however, his representatives attempted to evade the contract. The plaintiff, "*having proved the marriage,*" obtained a verdict for the sum claimed. There was an appeal to the court of the Master of the Rolls, and the bond was set aside on the ground that it had been given for "an immoral consideration." This decree was in turn reversed on an appeal to the Lord Keeper, but finally confirmed by the House of Lords. The precise part which Mistress Potter played in the negotiations for the marriage is not described. Elizabeth Percy's mother accused her waiting-woman of having "sold" her to Montagu; perhaps Potter held a similar position and was equally venal. Or perhaps the Dowager Countess herself had an interest in the promised £500; her own kindred openly accused her of having accepted bribes from Thynn. Lord Essex was one of the leaders of the Protestant party, and so presumably favourable to Monmouth and Monmouth's friends. But Essex was also uncle by marriage of Elizabeth Percy, and a trustee under the will of his brother-in-law, Earl Josceline. However he might regard Thomas Thynn politically, he felt bound in his private capacity to resent and oppose an alliance between his niece and that gentleman. He could not prevent the Dowager Countess from carrying out her design, but he has left us his opinion of the affair very freely expressed through the trustworthy medium of Evelyn. The diarist, under date of November 15, 1681, writes:—

"I dined with the Earl of Essex, who, after dinner in his study, where we were alone, related to me how much he had been scandalised and injured in the report of his being privy to the marriage of his Lady's niece, the rich

young widow of the late Lord Ogle, sole daughter of the Earl of Northumberland; showing me a letter of Mr. Thynn's excusing himself for not communicating his marriage to his Lordship. He acquainted me also with the whole story of that unfortunate lady being betrayed by her grandmother, the Countess of Northumberland and Colonel Bret¹ for money; and that though, upon the importunity of the Duke of Monmouth, he had delivered to the grandmother a particular of the jointure which Mr. Thynn pretended he could settle on the lady, yet he totally discouraged the proceeding, as by no means a competent match for one that, both by birth and fortune, might have pretended to the greatest Prince in Christendom. That he also proposed the Earl of Kingston² or the Lord Cranbourn,³ but was by no means for Mr. Thynn."

While Lord Essex might only protest unavailingly, there was one person who took a decided and successful stand against the consummation of these ill-starred nuptials. This was the bride herself. Up to the day of her marriage Lady Ogle had never seen Thynn; and her awe of the Dowager Countess was sufficient to induce her to go through the form of marriage with the person chosen for her. But whatever happened to spur her into sudden rebellion, whatever mysterious occurrence turned her placid indifference towards her husband into a lively hatred, this much is certain, that, almost immediately after the ceremony had concluded, Lady Ogle fled from London, and even from England—nor did she venture upon these shores again until Thomas Thynn was dead.

¹ This Colonel Bret is described by the Rev. E. Jackson, in his *History of Longleat*, as a "coadjutor" of Lady Northumberland.

² This was Robert Pierrepont, the newly succeeded third Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull (a cousin of Evelyn, by the way), who died a year later at Dieppe, *sine prole*.

³ James Cecil, Viscount Cranbourne, afterwards fourth Earl of Salisbury. He was a Roman Catholic, and was presented by the Grand Jury of Middlesex as a "Popish Recusant." The present Marquis of Salisbury is his descendant; the family having reverted to the Church of England.

The particulars of that wild flight overseas are as uncertain as the causes which led up to it. Naturally London soon rang with the news, and a hundred pretended explanations of the affair were afloat. Many thought that Lady Ogle, discovering at the last moment that she had been literally sold to her husband by Lady Northumberland, Bret, and Mistress Potter, had refused to abide by the marriage contract, and had escaped in order to sue for divorce. Others ascribed her strange conduct to the influence of Essex and other relatives, opposed to the Dowager Countess; and there can be little doubt but that she received assistance from some of these, or else she could hardly have made her elopement. Yet others declared that "a disgraceful event" in Thynn's past life had been revealed to her on her wedding day, and that the disgust which she felt for the man had impelled her to the desperate course which she took. There are good grounds for supposing this last to have been the correct solution of the mystery; the "disgraceful event" alluded to having been the betrayal through a mock marriage of a young lady of good family, and her subsequent abandonment to disease and poverty. This lady is said to have risen from a bed of suffering in order to interpose between her seducer and Lady Ogle; and after the latter's flight she, or some other interested person, certainly took steps to have the last ceremony annulled. In the "Memoirs of Sir John Reresby"¹ may be found the following entry:—

"*2nd Jan.* 1682.—I dined that day with my Lord Halifax and my Lord Conway . . . and acquainted the King with an affidavit made before me as a Justice of the Peace, the same day, concerning a pre-contract between Mr. Thynne and Mrs. Trevor, before his marriage with my Lady Northumberland (*sic*), for there were endeavours to null the said marriage, it not having been consummated, and my Lady Northumberland having fled from Mr. Thynne into Holland."

¹ Edition of 1875, p. 230.

In a note to Evelyn's Diary,¹ it is stated that Lady Ogle left her husband because she discovered that he had previously seduced, under a promise of marriage, a young lady who is said to have been in some way instrumental to his murder. Hence the burlesque epitaph :—

“ Here lies Tom Thynn of Longleat Hall,
Who never would have miscarried,
Had he married the woman he lay withal,
Or laid with the woman he married.”

For Lady Ogle was also suspected by Thynn's friends of being privy to his assassination.

De Fonblanque states that the heiress of the House of Percy took refuge in Holland with Sir William Temple, “the friend of her father and grandfather,” who “was now English Ambassador” at the Hague.² That she sought Temple's protection in the first instance is probably correct, but it was not in Holland, from which country Sir William had long been recalled. It is likely that the account given by another historian (who had access to the Longleat MSS.)³ is the true one, and that Lady Ogle went abroad in the care of Lady Temple. Thynn made no effort to follow her, contenting himself with successfully resisting the attempts to annul the marriage, and probably relying upon time and the influence of his powerful friends to make his peace with her. The Dowager Countess let it be known that she sympathised with him in the dispute, but she too thought it best to let affairs take their course for the time being. Truth to tell, it mattered little to her whether Lady Ogle were at home or abroad for the three years yet to run of her guardianship. She had duly fulfilled her contract with Thynn, and had nothing more to gain by compelling her grandchild's return. The position of all parties to the recent marriage is amusingly, if

¹ Bray's Edition, vol. ii. p. 586.

² *Annals of the House of Percy*, vol. ii.

³ Rev. E. Jackson ; *History of Longleat*, in the *Wilts Historical Magazine*, 1856.

coarsely, summed up in a letter written during the New Year festivities of 1682 by "a lady of the Brunswick family" to Lord and Lady Hatton, and preserved in the Hatton MSS. :—

"Mr. Thinn has proved his marriage with Lady Ogle, but she will not live with him for fear of being 'rotten before she is ripe.' Lord Suffolk, since he lost his wife and daughter, lives with his sister Northumberland. They have strange ambassadors—one from the King of Fez, the other from Muscovet. All the town has seen the last ; he goes to the play, and stinks so that the ladies are not able to take their muffs from their noses all the playtime."¹

Her brother, Lord Suffolk, was not the only member of her own family who lived free with the Dowager Countess at the expense of Lady Ogle, during this period. Her brother-in-law and sister, the Earl and Countess of Orrery, resided in Syon House, and the latter died there, as we learn from the register of the parish church of Isleworth.

While Lady Northumberland and Mr. Thynn rested secure in the belief that the recent marriage could not legally be set aside, there arrived in London a ~~Könings-~~man whose desperate mind was filled with the determination of setting Elizabeth Percy free even at the cost of a terrible crime. This man was Charles John, Count von Köningsmarck, and, before we enter upon a description of the bloody deed for which his name is notorious, it may be well to give a brief account of his strange career.

Charles John von Köningsmarck sprang from a family originally German, but led by an inherited love of adventure and intrigue to spread itself through many lands. The name in fact was famous all Europe over, as much for the warlike as for the amorous exploits of those who had held it. The father of Charles John von Köningsmarck, a general in the Swedish service, fell in battle in 1673 ;

¹ Published in the *First Report on Historical MSS., Royal Commission (Hatton MSS.)*.

his uncle, Count Otho William, was, at the period of which we write, commander of the Venetian forces. He had a brother and a sister both renowned for their beauty, and both implicated in amours of world-wide celebrity. The brother, Count Philip von Köningsmarck, was the luckless lover of Sophia Dorothea of Zell, consort of George I., and was assassinated with the connivance of that monarch,¹ then Electoral Prince of Hanover. The sister, Aurora von Köningsmarck, became the mistress of Augustus, Elector of Saxony (afterwards King), and was by him the mother of the illustrious general, Marshal Saxe.

As for Charles John von Köningsmarck, he was born in Sweden in 1659, and from his youth onward followed a life of roving and adventure. The courage which he displayed on many occasions of danger renders all the more amazing his dastardly conduct in regard to Thomas Thynn. When only seventeen he was severely wounded while boarding a Turkish vessel in the Mediterranean, being then in the service of the Knights of Malta. One of the most remarkable examples of his prowess occurred in May 1679, while he was attending the fêtes given at Madrid in honour of the marriage of the King of Spain. Madame d'Aulnoy, who was in the Queen's suite, saw him engage a bull in honour "of a young lady of her acquaintance." He was (she writes) one of six cavaliers, all handsomely mounted and dressed in black with white plumes in their hats, "their hatbands glittering with diamonds, and wearing crimson, blue, or yellow scarves, which some of them carried round their waists or over their shoulders, others wrapped about the arm." Twenty bulls were baited by them on the first day. One very furious animal attacked Köningsmarck and wounded him dangerously in the thigh. The young Count leaped from his horse, "and though he is no Spaniard, yet he would not be excused from any of the laws . . . and in spite of the fact that he had lost a great deal of blood and was forced to lean upon one of

¹ His assassination took place at Hanover in August 1694. Sophia Dorothea remained a prisoner until her death.

his footmen who held him up ; yet with great courage he advanced sword in hand, and succeeded in giving the bull a very great wound in the head ; and then presently turning himself towards that side where this young lady for whom he fought was, he kissed his sword, and suffered himself to be carried away by his people half dead."¹

Köningsmarck visited England for the second time in 1681, and, being the bearer of special letters of recommendation from the King of Sweden, was very well received. Among the houses which he visited was that of Lady Northumberland, where he met the youthful widow, Lady Ogle, and at once conceived for her a violent passion. Contemporary gossip differs as to whether his love was or was not returned. During the summer of the same year he is said to have followed the object of his attachment from London to the Continent (whither she went in charge of a person chosen by her grandmother, while the latter was negotiating for the marriage with Thynn), and to have obtained interviews with her at various places in France and Holland. He had been chosen, however, to command a small expedition sent against the rebellious Moors of Tangiers, and was therefore obliged to give up for the time his designs upon the heart of Lady Elizabeth, in order to embark for Africa. He seems to have carried out the task allotted to him bravely and successfully ; but on his return from the Mediterranean, he found that the heiress of the Percies had been forced into a loveless union, and had taken refuge from her husband in Holland. The detractors of Lady Ogle asserted freely that Köningsmarck again met her at the Hague after her hurried departure from England, and that she showed him a degree of favour which completely turned the head of the young soldier of fortune. It was even suggested at the time, and long afterwards repeated in unmistakable terms by Dean Swift,² that Elizabeth

¹ Translated from Madame la Comtesse d'Aulnoy's *Voyages*, vol. ii.

² In the rancorous *Windsor Prophecy*, which may be found quoted at p. 412 of this volume.

Percy directly prompted Count Charles to rid her of Mr. Thynn, either in fair fight *or by other means*. To speak plainly, she was accused of having inspired the love-sick Swede with the idea of assassinating her husband. That such should be the case, appears in the last degree improbable. Her age alone—she was not yet fifteen—must surely be accepted as an argument in her favour; and, while she was admittedly headstrong and quick-tempered, there is nothing in her character, as known to us, to suggest that she inherited any of the homicidal traits of her collateral ancestress, the Countess of Somerset.¹ That she may have betrayed a girlish affection for the handsome Köningsmarck is quite possible; but the charge of having instigated her husband's murder cannot be sustained against her. For that black deed, the Swede and his agents must bear the blame.

Fired with the determination of avenging his mistress, Köningsmarck betook himself to Havre, and thence sent a challenge to Thynn.² The person who carried this cartel into England was a remarkable character—a Swedish captain of horse, Christopher Vratz by name. Vratz had won upon many battlefields a reputation for absolute fearlessness. At the siege of Mons he had been one of three survivors out of a "forlorn hope" consisting of fifty men, and, although severely wounded, had succeeded in cutting his way back to the forces of the Prince of Orange with a standard which he had captured. For this exploit he was ennobled, and given a place on the Prince's body-guard. In consequence of benefits received from the House of Köningsmarck, Vratz was devoted to the young Count Charles, whose instructor in arms he had been. His devotion, in fact, was of the sort that sticks at nothing, as may be judged by the sequel of this strange story. Courage was by no means a prominent attribute of "Tom of Ten Thousand," and the challenge sent by Vratz was returned

¹ Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset, the poisoner of Sir Thomas Overbury, was great-grandaunt of Elizabeth Percy.

² Echard; *Hist. of England*, pp. 865, 987, 1019.

unanswered. The Swedish captain hurried back into France to consult with his principal, the result being that Köningsmarck sent a second and more imperative defiance, accusing Thynn of having basely tricked Lady Ogle into a marriage, and threatening to brand him everywhere as a coward, unless he fixed time and place for a hostile meeting.¹ At the subsequent trial, Köningsmarck and Vratz swore that Thynn's reply to this was to send six hired bravos to France, for the express purpose of assassinating both the Count and his messenger, lest they might succeed in forcing him into a duel.² This statement, although not denied by Thynn's party, is unsupported by any other published evidence, and may be an invention. But assassinations and attempted assassinations of this kind by the band of rakes and "Hectors," to which Thynn and Monmouth belonged, are actually known to have taken place; and there is on record a case of brutal murder committed by Monmouth and a roystering party of his friends (the Dukes of Somerset³ and Albemarle,⁴ and "Tom of Ten Thousand" himself, being among the number) upon the person of an unfortunate citizen, one Peter Bruell, who had been so unlucky as to offend them.⁵ There were men to be met with in London at the time, dare-devils of the Blood kind, who would readily undertake to assassinate any one, no matter how great, for money or even favour. It is quite within the bounds of possibility

¹ Echard.

² *Ibid.* See also *English Causes Célèbres*, pp. 81-85.

³ Francis, fifth Duke of Somerset, who was himself to fall a victim to an assassin. See *note*, p. 400.

⁴ Christopher Monk, second Duke of Albemarle, son of the great Monk of Restoration fame. He was the first husband of the mad Elizabeth Cavendish.

⁵ The circumstances of this crime are as follows:—Monmouth, with Somerset, Albemarle, Tom Thynn, and others had been engaged in an orgie at Whetstone Park, a notorious haunt, the name of which still survives in a narrow alley north of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Peter Bruell, an honest resident of the parish, had in some way incurred the displeasure of the "Hectors." His evil star led him to cross their path at Whetstone, when they fell upon him with one accord, and held him while Monmouth passed his ruffian sword through the defenceless victim's body.—*Dom. State Papers, Charles II.*

that Thynn sent some of his "hangers on" to remove such inconvenient enemies as Köningsmarck and Vratz. If so, he did not succeed in his object. The two Swedes, finding it impossible at that distance to taunt him into fighting, and (according to their own tale) furious at his attempt upon their lives, crossed over to England, bringing with them Köningsmarck's younger brother, the ill-fated Count Philip Christopher. The party reached London about the middle of January 1682. There existed at this period, behind Leicester House,¹ a celebrated riding-school kept by a French exile, Major Foubert. Foubert added to his income by taking in resident pupils, and foreign lodgers of distinction. The elder Köningsmarck had resided in the school during his former visit to England, and he now, in company with his brother and Captain Vratz, again took up his quarters there. There too Vratz encountered two former comrades in arms, Lieutenant John Stern, a Swede, and George Borosky or Boratzi, of Polish birth. These latter were admitted to the confidence of Köningsmarck; and the four men (Count Philip Christopher being esteemed too young to take part in their councils) walked together in Leicester Fields while maturing a plan of revenge against Thynn. The first step taken was to challenge the Wilts knight of the shire² for the third time. This Vratz did in person, impugning Thynn's courage to his face in the presence of several persons, and volunteering to take Köningsmarck's quarrel upon himself. Still Lady Ogle's husband would not fight.³

Köningsmarck and his zealous adherent declared at their trial that, after this last public affront to Thynn, their lives

¹ Leicester House was in Swan Close, Leicester Fields (hard by what is now Leicester Square). Foubert's riding-school had been formerly the military yard founded by Henry, Prince of Wales, elder brother of Charles I. The place remained "an academy for riding and other gentleman-like" exercises down to Pennant's time (1790) at least.

² Thynn represented the county of Wilts in Parliament from 1670 to the day of his death.

³ It was proved at the trial that even after this Köningsmarck consulted a member of the Swedish Legation as to the possibility of compelling Thynn to meet him; but that nothing could be done in this direction.

were no longer safe from the assassins of the Monmouth faction, and that they were driven to take the initiative "in self defence."¹ However true this explanation may have been, and however strongly it may have appealed to the distorted minds of these soldiers of fortune, it cannot, of course, be held to excuse in any way the atrocious crime which they now deliberately set out to commit.

On Sunday, February 12, 1682, the Duke of Monmouth and his bosom friend, Mr. Thynn, visited the Dowager Countess of Northumberland "at her house by Charing Cross," and remained there until late in the afternoon. They drove thence in a coach to Monmouth's residence, where the Duke was set down, Mr. Thynn continuing his journey alone. Murder of
Tom Thynn
and fate
of his
assassins. Dusk was drawing in as the vehicle turned into Pall Mall. Suddenly, opposite St. Albans Street,² the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard, and a voice called upon the driver in broken English to stop "or he was a dead man." The voice was that of Major Vratz, who, with Lieutenant Stern and the Pole Borosky, all on horseback, had apparently been waiting for Thynn at that point. Stern pointed a brace of pistols at the heads of the servants; while Vratz and Borosky rode up close to the coach, the one being at the north, the other at the south window. Vratz said something to Thynn, probably renewing the former challenge, or else taunting him with cowardice; while Borosky kept the doomed man covered with a blunderbuss. Suddenly, and without any possibility of an exchange of signals between Vratz and the Pole (who were separated by the great, high-roofed coach), the latter's blunderbuss went off, all four bullets with which it had been loaded entering the body of Mr. Thynn. At the trial, it was alleged by the defence that Borosky had discharged his piece accidentally and on account of

¹ Evidence at trial; *English Causes Célèbres*.

² Near the site of the present United Service Club.

nervousness, the real object of the three men being to force Thynn to leave his coach and cross swords with Vratz. However this may be, the assailants, realising what had happened, turned their horses' heads and fled. Köningsmarck had not appeared in the affair at all; but he must have received speedy news of what had happened, for he too left London before nightfall, and fled in the direction of Gravesend.

The right arm of the civil power at this time in London was Sir John Reresby; yet so paralysed were Thynn's friends by the catastrophe, that although it had occurred no later than five o'clock in the afternoon, application was not made to Reresby for a "hue and cry" after the assassins until an hour before midnight. In Sir John's Memoirs is the following note :—

"*12th Feb. 1682.*—At eleven o'clock as I was going to bed Mr. Thynn's gentleman came to me to grant a Hue and Cry; and soon after, the Duke of Monmouth's page to desire me to come to his master at Mr. Thynn's lodgings, sending his coach to fetch me. I found him surrounded with several gentlemen and lords, and Mr. Thynn mortally wounded by five bullets which had entered his belly and side, shot from a blunderbuss."¹

Although Reresby misses no opportunity for self-commendation in his Memoirs, it must be owned that he was an active and skilful officer; and the speed with which he tracked down and captured the assassins was remarkable, considering the tardiness of his notice, and the meagre resources at his command. Before noon next day, Vratz, Stern, and Borosky had all been laid by the heels, and a reward of £200 offered for the capture of Köningsmarck, against whom Monmouth swore out a special information.

Thynn died at six o'clock on Monday morning, some thirteen hours after he had been shot. The news set London in a ferment. It was at first reported that the murder was "a Popish outrage," the dead man having been a leader of the extreme Protestant faction. Then a rumour

¹ *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, p. 235.

spread that Thynn had been slain by the Catholics in mistake for the Duke of Monmouth ; and ballads and broadsides by the dozen came fluttering out of Grub Street in support of these wild theories. The capture of the three criminals and the mention of Köningsmarck's name in connection with the affair had the effect of turning the tide of ribald literature in quite another direction. "Popish plots" had become common enough of late, but here was something new for the public to gape at—a tragedy of love, jealousy, and revenge. Grub Street poured forth its ballads and broadsides in a faster and fouler stream than ever. It was darkly hinted that Tom Thynn had killed himself for love of his runaway wife ; that the Mrs. Trevor whom he had betrayed was his murderess ; that Lady Ogle had hired foreign bravos to assassinate the consort she detested. This last proved to be the most popular version ; and as the identity of Köningsmarck was gradually unveiled, and the fact made certain that he had been one of Elizabeth Percy's warmest admirers, the printed attacks upon the latter grew bolder, and the great mass of the public believed that this mere slip of a girl had really procured the crime.

Meanwhile the King and Council (knowing that any laxity on their part would be seized upon as evidence of their hatred of Thynn and sympathy with his slayers) showed themselves exceptionally eager in bringing the accused to justice. Early on Monday afternoon, Vratz and his associates were examined before Charles at Whitehall. Reresby complains that they were treated with too great consideration, but there is no precise account of what took place. A few days later Köningsmarck was arrested at Gravesend, while waiting to embark on a Swedish vessel. Carried to London, he too was examined by the King (again, thinks Reresby, with excessive politeness), and then passed over to Chief-Justice Pemberton, who committed him to Newgate to await trial.

The trial began at the Old Bailey on February 27 ; Vratz, Stern, and Borosky being charged with the murder of

Thynn, and Köningsmarck with being an accessory before the fact. Circumstantial evidence alone was produced against the last-named. It was shown that he had been a suitor for Lady Ogle's hand, and he had been heard to declare that he would "have her husband's life." He had arrived in England only ten days before the murder, and during that time had been in constant communication with the assassins. Vratz tried to exculpate his friend and former pupil by bringing forward evidence to the effect that he (Vratz) had challenged Thynn to an affair of honour; and alleging that, so far from there having been any plot to assassinate Thynn, their sole intention in waylaying him in Pall Mall was to make him "measure swords like a gentleman." The blunderbuss, it was pretended, had been discharged by the nervous shaking of Borosky's hand; and the whole affair was therefore "an accident." Vratz, Stern, and Borosky all three made oath that Köningsmarck had not been cognisant of their designs; and Count Philip Christopher Köningsmarck swore to an *alibi* in favour of his brother. In spite of the strong circumstantial evidence, Chief-Justice Pemberton summed up in Köningsmarck's favour, and the jury acquitted him. Vratz, Stern, and Borosky, on the contrary, were all convicted of murder, and condemned to death. Reresby declares that "the King was not displeased at the result of the trial." The faction of Monmouth, on the contrary, were furious at Köningsmarck's acquittal. It was alleged that there had been collusion, and that the jury was a "packed" one, consisting largely of foreigners.¹ Köningsmarck lost no time in shaking the dust of England from his feet. A few weeks after his departure, William, Lord Cavendish (afterwards first Duke of Devonshire),² issued a formal challenge to the Count to undergo with

¹ This assertion is repeated by Luttrell (*Brief Historical Relation*, vol. i. 163, &c.), but as no particulars are given its truth cannot be determined.

² Son and heir of William, third Earl of Devonshire, by Lady Elizabeth Cecil. Born in 1640-1, he married a daughter of the Duke of Ormonde, was created Duke by William III., and died 1707.

him the ancient ordeal of battle by single combat. It is a question whether Köningsmarck ever received this challenge; at any rate the proposed combat never took place.

The three convicted assassins were hanged in Pall Mall on the spot where the crime had been committed. To the last Captain Vratz maintained a reckless courage which excited the admiration even of those who most execrated the murder. He went to the gallows much as he had gone with the "forlorn hope" at the siege of Mons; and if he experienced any feelings of shame he concealed them from the world. Evelyn writes:—

"10th March 1682.—This day was executed Colonel Vrats and some of his accomplices for the execrable murder of Mr. Thynn, set on by the principal, Köningsmarck; he (Vrats) went to execution like an undaunted hero, as one who has done a friendly office for that base coward, Count Köningsmarck, who had hopes to marry his (Thynn's) widow, the rich Lady Ogle, and was acquitted by a corrupt jury, and so got away. Vrats told a friend of mine who accompanied him to the gallows and gave him some good advice, that he did not value dying of a rush, and hoped and believed God would deal with him like a gentleman.

"Never man went so unconcerned to his sad fate."¹

As for Köningsmarck, he died the death that would have better fitted Vratz—sword in hand, with his face to the foe. To call Köningsmarck a coward is, in spite of his connection with Thynn's murder, to find oneself contradicted by a hundred brave episodes of his youth and manhood. When acquitted in England, he was barely twenty-three years of age. He hurried to Venice, where his uncle Count Otho William von Köningsmarck commanded the forces of the republic;² and immediately took service under that distinguished captain. At Navarino, and again at Modon, he displayed courage and capacity

¹ *Diary.*

² Otho William v. Köningsmarck died generalissimo of Venice in 1688.

of a high order ; and when he was slain in battle against the Turks at Argos, in August 1686, it was felt that Europe had lost one of her most promising soldiers, and Venice a future generalissimo.¹

If Mr. Thomas Thynn had been looked upon in life as "a battered rake" whose sole claims to note were his great wealth and friendship with Monmouth, the world came to regard him in death as a hero and almost as a martyr.² He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where the fine monument erected to his memory may yet be seen. The original epitaph placed over him by his friends has, however, disappeared.³ It was wisely removed by Dean Spratt, who deemed it not only undeserved but also libellous to the Government, and to Thynn's widow, Lady Ogle.⁴ The portion supposed to refer to this lady and her family is certainly bitterly suggestive. It ran thus :—

*"Uxorem duxit Elizabetham, Comitissam de Ogle,
 "Antiquissimæ ut et Illustrissimæ familiæ de Percy,
 "Northumbriæ Comitum filiam et hædam
 "Unicum.*

"HINC ILLÆ LACHRYMÆ!"

A few weeks after her husband's burial, Lady Ogle returned to England and took up her residence at North-

¹ Pennant falls into a curious error for one of his accuracy when he speaks of Königsmarck. Having dwelt upon the murder of Thynn, and the Count's acquittal, he says of the latter : "He afterwards met with a fate suited to his actions : he attempted an intrigue in 1686, in Germany, with a lady of distinguished rank : he was one night waylaid, by order of the jealous husband ; and was literally cut to pieces." This, of course, relates to Charles von Königsmarck's younger brother, Philip Christopher, who was put to death by order of the Elector of Hanover (afterwards George I. of England) for an alleged intrigue with Queen Sophia Dorothea of Zell. See *Love of An Uncrowned Queen*, by W. H. Wilkins.

² *Dict. of National Biography*.

³ It may be seen in the engraving of the tomb in Dart's *Westminster Abbey*, vol. ii.

⁴ *Antiquities of Westminster* (Neale and Brayley).

umberland House. In the *Daily Intelligencer* news-letter¹ of March 23, 1682, is a somewhat naïve declaration, purporting to come from the young heiress herself, on the subject of Thynn's murder :—

"Since the Lady Ogle's arrival many persons of quality have been to visit her ; she seeming very much dejected in the unfortunate death of Esquire Thynn, declaring that *she was altogether surprised upon the news she read of that unhappy accident*, as not imagining that such barbarity could be enacted by man, much more in England, and we hear she will not appear publick until the Court comes from Newmarket."

Three weeks later, the Dowager Countess, who was at Petworth, sent her grandchild an imperative summons to join her there ; and having now no Tom Thynn to dread, Lady Ogle went to pay her respects to the guardian whom she had not seen since her flight to Holland. Old Lady Northumberland's object in thus resuming her sway over the girl-widow was soon brought to light. Hardly three years of her prized and profitable guardianship remained, and she could not resist the opportunity of attempting to shape for the third time Elizabeth Percy's matrimonial affairs. It would appear as though she had begun to cast about for a suitable successor to Tom Thynn before the latter was well in his grave. On this last occasion, the choice which she made was certainly more commendable than had been the case either in 1679 or in 1681. There is likelihood, however, that it was the new suitor himself, and not Lady Northumberland, who took the first steps in the matter. The third Duke of Somerset is said to have died for love of Elizabeth Percy's mother. His cousin, the sixth Duke, now appeared as a candidate for the hand of Elizabeth Percy herself.

Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset, was in his twentieth year, one of the great noblemen of England, and the chief of a name which, in the male line, could claim no very ancient or illustrious descent, but which had been

¹ Preserved in the British Museum Library.

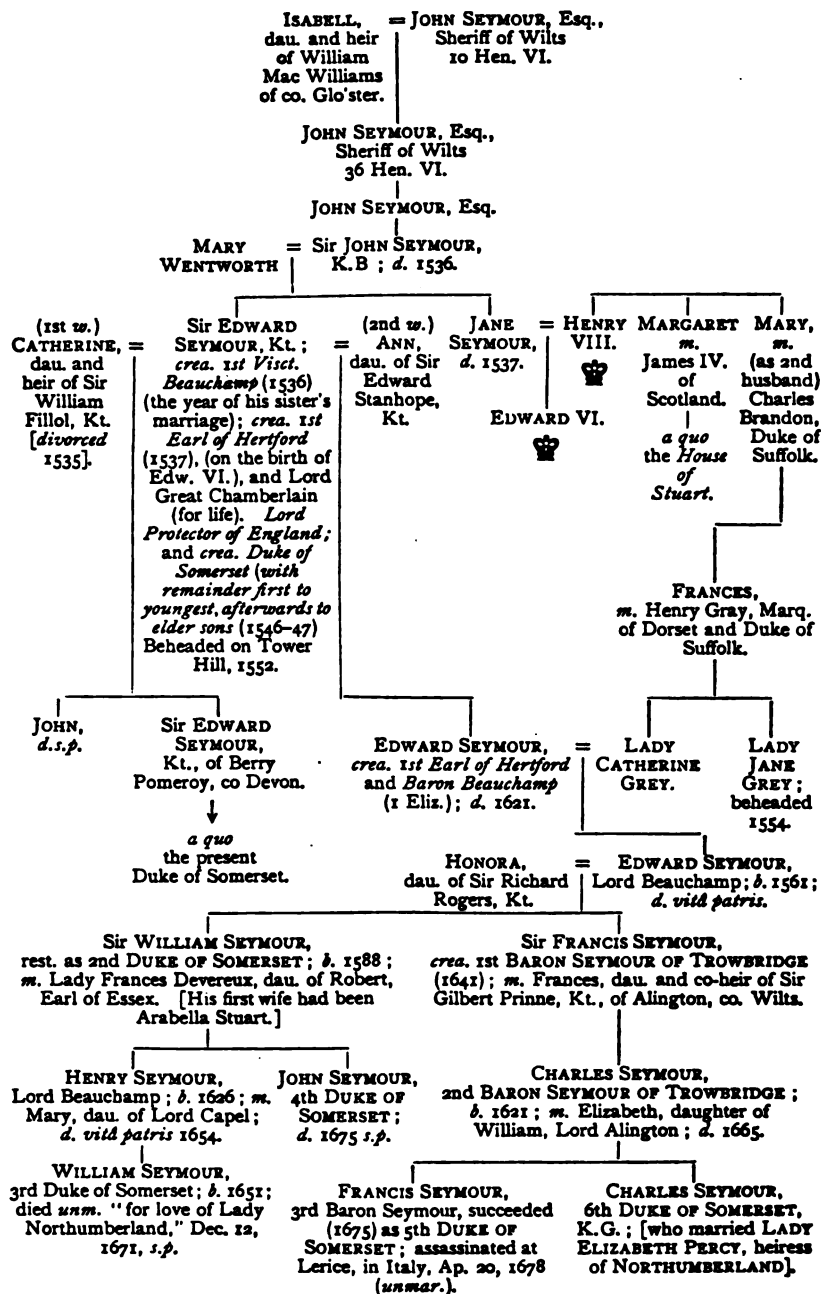
raised to great dignity through the marriage of Jane Seymour to Henry VIII., and subsequently endowed with royal blood through the union of Edward, Earl of Hertford, and Lady Catherine Grey. The descendants of this alliance indeed were accounted, after the royal family, next in the line of succession to the English throne. But a glance at the genealogy opposite will convey, in the briefest and most accurate manner, the lofty position which this head of a family, so obscure as scarcely to be heard of two centuries before, now occupied in the nobility of the kingdom.

Charles, Duke of Somerset, as Lord Dartmouth observes in a note to Burnet,¹ was born to neither title nor estate. The early years of his life were spent as the younger son of a cadet branch of the House of Seymour. Even after the third and fourth Dukes of Somerset died without issue, and the superior title passed to his elder brother Francis, Lord Trowbridge, the prospects of "Mr. Charles Seymour" seemed but little brighter; for it was believed that Duke Francis would certainly marry and have a family. The education of the heir presumptive was, in consequence, greatly neglected, and though he was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, he never took a degree. There are evidences that his brother and he were on the worst of terms; their natures, indeed, differed as widely as their habits and resources. Charles Seymour was practically a pensioner upon the bounty of his uncle, Lord Alington,² and the latter's sister-in-law, the Countess of Northampton.³ Lady Northampton took a fancy to the handsome lad, and (although she was no blood relation) he was accustomed to call her his "aunt." This period of comparative privation, far from softening Seymour's nature, seems rather to have rendered him irritable and unsympathetic; while

¹ *History of His Own Times*, vol. iv. p. 13.

² This was William, third Lord Alington, brother of Elizabeth, Lady Seymour, of Trowbridge. He died 1684.

³ Mary Noel, daughter of Baptist, third Viscount Campden, and wife of James Compton, third Earl of Northampton, was sister of Lady Alington, Seymour's aunt by marriage.



the unreasonable pride which long afterwards made his name a byword, may be traced as much to the humiliations of his boyhood as to the unexpected manner in which capricious fortune showered her favours upon him. That careless "Hector,"¹ the fifth Duke of Somerset, was suddenly and disgracefully cut off before he had time to marry. While travelling with some French friends through the town of Lerice in Italy, he had insulted two ladies, the sisters of Signor Horatio Botti. This latter gentleman pursued Somerset to the door of his inn, and shot him dead.² The murder brought about international complications, England demanding that Botti should suffer for his crime. But Italian sympathy was all with the culprit, who, although sentenced to death, was permitted to escape, while his Judges hanged him in effigy. Meanwhile Charles Seymour succeeded to the Dukedom of Somerset, being then in his seventeenth year,³ and the penniless younger brother of yesterday became one of the richest and most powerful nobles in Great Britain. Four years later he came forward as a suitor for the hand and great inheritance of Lady Ogle. He probably anticipated an easy triumph; but in this he was disappointed. The young widow showed herself indifferent alike to his rank and good looks. Evil tongues whispered that she was still dreaming of Köningsmarck; it were more charitable to suppose that the tragic end of Thynn had for the time unnerved her and given her a natural disinclination for society. His Grace of Somerset came all in the bravery of twenty years, with friends, lackeys, postillions, and outriders, to pay his respects at Petworth. But he only saw the Dowager Countess of Northumberland, Lady Ogle positively refusing to appear; so that the miry roads of Sussex and Hants had been crossed for nought, and the gay party drove despondently away. A few weeks later,

¹ He belonged to the riotous brotherhood who went by that name, and had been concerned in the shameful murder of Bruell by Monmouth and others of the "Hector" persuasion.

² On April 20, 1678.

³ He was born in 1662.

Somerset made the pilgrimage to Petworth again; this time unostentatiously and attended by a single servant. We may read the result in a letter written by him to "the Dowager Duchess of Somerset" (whom De Fonblanque curiously enough describes as the Duke's "grandmother," though she was actually widow of John, fourth Duke, and consequently not a blood relation):¹—

"I differed (deferred) troubling you with a letter till I could give you a full account of my journey. The first time I was there I could have no opportunity to speak with my Lady: but the second time I went alone and got an opportunity, but no answer but that she was resolved not to alter her condition; and desired I should think no more of it, which was a thing I told my Lady was impossible for me to do, let the obstacles be never so great. My Lady made my Aunt Northampton the same answer she made me, who I find is much startled at it, more a great deal than I think needes to be; for I hope if y^r Grace be pleased to lay y^r commands on both my Aunts² to pursue, while they are there, I may have some favorable answer to that which is so passionately the concern of him who subscribes himself, may it please Your Grace,

"Your most Dutiful and

"Obedient Servant,

"SOMERSET."³

But old Lady Northumberland proved a more influential ally than any of the Duke's own relatives; and to her he was at last forced to appeal. The Dowager Countess, as might be expected, made her own terms, and they were by no means light ones. Her personal dower

¹ One of Somerset's grandmothers was Lady Alington, the other was Frances, Lady Seymour of Trowbridge. The Dowager Duchess to whom he wrote, as above, was Sarah, daughter of Sir Edward Alston, M.D., President of the College of Physicians, who married John, fourth Duke of Somerset, and after his death Henry Hare, second Lord Coleraine. She died 1692.

² Lady Northampton and Lady Berkeley.

³ *Alnwick MSS.*; quoted by De Fonblanque.

was to be largely increased, and Somerset was to sign an undertaking to abandon his family name in favour of that of Percy. To the former proviso the Duke consented readily enough; he had understood that he must follow the example of Mr. Thynn and the relatives of Lord Ogle, in purchasing Lady Northumberland's acquiescence. But the change of name was another matter altogether; and it was only with the gravest reluctance (and a determination to evade the fulfilment of his promise if possible)¹ that he finally surrendered upon this head. The Dowager then set herself to persuade Lady Ogle into a third marriage; and here, by dint of alternate threats and reasoning, this indomitable woman once more attained her object. The Duke was again invited to Petworth, where the wedding took place on August 30, 1682.

Before proceeding with the story of their careers, a few words on the personal appearance and characters of the young couple may not be amiss. Elizabeth, Baroness Percy and Duchess of Somerset, had inherited a considerable share of the good looks which distinguished both her parents, but she was never regarded as a "beauty," as her mother had been. Her hair, as Swift with persistent venom took care to inform the world, was red—a trait inherited from the "Wizard Earl," her great-grandfather; and she was foolishly sensitive upon that score. In person she was of good height, inclining towards the end of her life to stoutness. The best picture of her, when young, is supposed to be the unfinished one by Sir Peter Lely,² painted just after her marriage to Lord Ogle.

¹ He did in the end compel his wife to free him from the agreement by a special deed.

² One of Lely's earliest English portraits had been that of Josceline, eleventh Earl of Northumberland, as a little boy. His *last* effort was the picture, above alluded to, of Josceline's daughter. It is said that while engaged upon this work "the pencil dropped from his hand, and a fit of apoplexy closed the career of the great painter for ever. He died the same day." Lady Ogle's enemies numbered Lely among the many victims of that "ill luck" which was supposed to fall upon all connected with her.

Her mental powers were admitted, by friends and foes alike, to be far above the average. Lord Dartmouth called her "the best bred, as well as the best born woman in England;"¹ and Lady Strafford was of opinion that "if her Duke had thought her what all the world would think, capable of advising him, matters would not be as they are."²

As for Somerset, his amazing pride was as yet kept within limits, and had not attained (as it afterwards did) the proportions of a disease. Lord Stanhope, in his History of England, sums up the Duke's character at this period as that of "a well-meaning man, but of shy and proud habits, and slender understanding."³ Dartmouth goes much further, when he declares that Somerset "always acted more by humour than by reason. He was a man of vast pride, and, having a very low education, showed it in a very indecent manner. His high title came to him by one man's misfortune,⁴ and his great estate by another's;⁵ for he was born to neither, but elated both to a ridiculousness."⁶ Mackey's description, written in 1702, is more flattering: "The Duke of Somerset was of a middle stature, well shaped, a very black complexion; a lover of music and poetry; of good judgment" (to this Swift appended the sweeping comment "*not a grain!*"), "but by reason of a great hesitation in his speech, wants expression." All these, with the exception of Swift's interpolation, are the opinions of the Duke's friends and associates. What his opponents, the followers of Bolingbroke and Ormonde, said of him need not be quoted here.

When, for the third time, Elizabeth Percy stripped the *lacs d'amour* from about her escutcheon, she had the good sense to remain for some time in the seclusion

¹ Burnet; *History of His Own Times*.

² *Strafford Papers*, 2nd series, June 1714.

³ Stanhope, vol. i. p. 84.

⁴ The assassination of his brother by Botti.

⁵ The murder of Tom Thynn.

⁶ Lord Dartmouth, in Burnet's *History*, vol. iv. p. 13.

of Petworth, before taking her place at Court. Her first child, Algernon, was born in 1683, when she was little over sixteen, and only lived a few months. Next year she gave birth to twins, one of whom (a daughter) died in infancy, while the other was Algernon, Earl of Hertford, afterwards heir to the united honours of Percy and Seymour. It is curious to note, from the baptismal entries of these children in the Petworth registers, how Somerset endeavoured to evade the condition which bound him to use, on behalf of himself and his offspring, the name of Percy. His wife was not yet legally of age, and could not therefore absolve him from his pledge; while, if he allowed his sons and daughters to be christened under their paternal surname, the Dowager Countess had it in her power to set aside the marriage settlements. As he had a wholesome fear of Earl Algernon's widow, he adopted the expedient of entering no surname at all; so that the children born prior to 1688 were described in the register as "the Lord Algernon," "the Lady Catherine," and so forth. The Duchess attained her majority on January 26, 1688, and exactly *four days afterwards* she executed the deed which "released him from the obligation to assume her family name." Thereafter all his children were baptized as Seymours; and whereas the baptismal register of 1687 makes mention of "the Lord Edward" simply, we read that on May 27, 1689, "Lord Edward Seymour" was "buried in linen."¹

The Duke himself did not come of age until the year after his marriage; when he at once accepted the post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles II. As a reward for having taken no part in the Rye House Conspiracy (which caused the deaths of no less than three of his wife's kindred²) he was, on April 8, 1684, installed

¹ *Registers of Petworth.*

² Algernon Sidney, first cousin of the Duchess, was beheaded; as was Lord William Russell, her uncle by marriage. Another uncle, the Earl of Essex, committed suicide in the Tower; and even the traitorous Lord Howard of Escrick,

a knight of the Garter. At the funeral of Charles II. he acted as second mourner, walking immediately after the new king. It is observed that such solemn pageants were greatly to his taste. His vanity was flattered by the all but royal position assigned to him (for, the Duke of Norfolk being a Roman Catholic, and therefore debarred from sitting in Parliament, Somerset took his place as premier peer of the realm); while the pomp and circumstance of the state ceremonial appealed strongly to a taste naturally florid. He took part in the funerals of Mary II., William III., Anne, and George I., and carried the orb at no less than four coronations. Swift said of him "that had he not been a Duke, he would have made an admirable master of ceremonies, or keeper of the puppets." When the Archduke Charles was named King of Spain by the Allies, Somerset was sent to welcome him at Portsmouth;¹ and the patience of the future Emperor is said to have been sorely tried by the elaborate manner in which every petty detail of the prescribed form of reception was carried out.

Somerset was at first in high favour with James II., who on August 2, 1685, appointed him to the command of the 3rd or Queen's Regiment of Dragoons,² a body of troops which had been originally raised for the suppression of Monmouth's Rebellion. But the Duke's sympathies were secretly with Monmouth and the Protestant cause. When ordered to arrest certain fugitives from Sedgemoor, he temporised, and sent to demand "a reason"; to which the Duke of Beaufort replied in a vigorous letter of remonstrance, pointing out that Somerset was the King's servant and lieutenant, and therefore bound to pursue those in arms against the throne, or else renounce his

who turned informer against his fellow-conspirators, was a relative—being of the same blood (and of much the same disposition) as the Dowager Countess of Northumberland.

¹ In 1703.

² Now the 3rd Hussars.

oath of allegiance altogether.¹ While this correspondence lasted, the rebels in question made good their escape. Somerset, however, continued to hold office for two years longer, when his action in regard to the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor d'Adda, brought about his dismissal. There is more than one version of this affair, but that given by Burnet is the most circumstantial. When the Roman envoy arrived at Windsor, James determined to give him a public reception. Somerset consulted his lawyers, and learned that such recognition of the Catholic faith was illegal in the then state of English law. Queen Mary, bigoted Catholic though she was, had compelled Cardinal Pole (the Nuncio of her day) to wait in Holland until the existing statutes were repealed. But James II. did not possess equal discretion. Regarding himself as above the law, he invited D'Adda and his suite to Windsor. Burnet quotes as follows from an unpublished memoir of Lord Lonsdale: "That the Nuntio might have all the honour done him that was possible, it was resolved that a Duke should introduce him. The matter was therefore proposed to the Duke of Somerset. The Duke humbly desired of the King to be excused; the King asked him his reason; the Duke told him he conceived it to be against law; to which the King said he would pardon him. The Duke replied, he was no very good lawyer, but he thought he had heard it said, that a pardon granted a person offending under assurance of obtaining it, was void. This offended the King extremelie; he said publickly, he wondered at his insolence; and told the Duke he would make him fear him as well as the laws. To which the Duke answered that, as he was his sovereign, he should ever have all the dutie and reverence for his person that was due from a subject to his prince, but whilst he was no traitor or criminal, he was so secure in his justice, that he could not fear him as offenders do. Notwithstanding the extreme offence this matter gave his majestie, yet out of his good-

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, vol. xx.; Beaufort to Somerset, July 5, 1686.

ness he was pleased to tell the Duke that he would excuse him. And yet, within two days after, he was told positively that the King would be obeyed. He urged the King's promise to excuse him, but in vain."¹ The result was that the Papal Nuncio was introduced by the Duke of Grafton; while Somerset was soon afterwards removed from his position in the royal household, as well as from the command of the Queen's Dragoons.

After this dismissal, Somerset naturally became more disaffected than ever; and he was one of those who received Dykvelde, the secret agent sent over by the Prince of Orange in 1688. But whether from a sense of past favours, or (as many supposed) from jealousy of the leading part played by his cousin, Sir Edward Seymour, the legitimate head of the family,² the Duke remained inactive during the events leading up to the flight of James, and the declaration that the throne was vacant. In the Convention Parliament he at first voted, with Ormonde, Clarendon, Nottingham, and Archbishop Sancroft, against the bestowal of the crown upon William and Mary, and in favour of the alternative proposition of a regency.³ He held that, in view of the declaration made by the nation eight years before,⁴ Parliament had no power to depose the

¹ Burnet; *History of His Own Times*, vol. iii. p. 178.

² Sir Edward Seymour, fourth Bart., of Berry Pomeroy, co. Devon, was the fifth in direct descent from the Protector Somerset by his *first* marriage (see *Seymour Genealogy*, p. 399). He had been Speaker of the Parliament dissolved in January 1679, and was re-elected in opposition to the Court candidate in the new Parliament which assembled on March of the same year, only to be set aside by a compromise. There is an old story to the effect that when the Prince of Orange landed at Torquay, he asked Seymour (by way of a compliment) if he did not "belong to the family of the Duke of Somerset." "No, sir," replied Sir Edward, with perfect justice, "the Duke of Somerset belongs to *my* family." The senior line of the Seymours inherited the honours which had been diverted from their ancestor, in the person of Sir Edward Seymour, sixth Bart., grandson of William III.'s adherent.

³ Thirty-five peers, two archbishops, and twelve bishops supported the motion for a regency in the House of Lords. They were defeated by a majority of only two votes.

⁴ On the defeat of the Exclusion Bill.

King, or to alter the lineal course of succession. But after the conference which took place between the two Houses, he was induced, by the arguments of Halifax and Danby, to abandon these views, and side with the majority. The new King, who had a good memory, never forgave this reluctance to join his cause, and to the end of his reign treated Somerset with great coldness. For some months the Duke frequented Court regularly; but encountering little favour from William or his ministers, he retired to the country in disgust, giving as his reason "the undue amount of honours and rewards bestowed upon the monarch's Dutch followers, to the exclusion of the native English." In spite of his lack of education, he was in 1689 elected Chancellor of Cambridge University; and when the new Parliament met in March 1690, he succeeded Halifax as Speaker of the House of Lords. Rumours were now current that he had again changed his politics, and he was suspected by the Court party of being in correspondence with St. Germain.

The friendship entertained by Queen Anne for the Duke and Duchess of Somerset originated in April 1692, when Anne, having fallen into disgrace with her sister and brother-in-law, was ejected from her lodgings in the Cockpit, and all friends of the Court were forbidden to give her shelter or assistance. Somerset, braving the royal displeasure, invited the Princess to Syon, where she continued to reside for some time. It is likely that the moving spirit in this clever piece of intrigue was really Duchess Elizabeth. Somerset himself had neither the foresight nor the strength of character to take the initiative in so dangerous an affair. Anne was very grateful for the kindness shown to her in the time of adversity, and even when her court was dominated by Tory influence she continued to regard the Whig Duchess of Somerset with friendship, and to keep her in her service. No sooner, indeed, was William III. dead

Friendship of
Queen Anne:
Swift's
savage
attack.

and the new Queen upon the throne, than Somerset and his wife began to enjoy the rewards of their generous conduct. The Duke was at once appointed Master of the Horse, and became an active member of the Privy Council. In 1703 he was sent as Anne's representative to escort the Archduke Charles to London, and in 1706 sat upon the Commission appointed to effect the Union with Scotland. During the crisis of February 1708, when Marlborough and Godolphin succeeded in driving Harley and St. John out of the ministry, Somerset ranged himself upon the side of the great Duke, apparently under the impression that he would be offered one of the vacant offices. The Whig leaders, however, had a poor opinion of his capacity, and the all-powerful "Junto"¹ vetoed his appointment. Marlborough's wife also expostulated with her lord upon his alleged intention to promote Somerset; to which the Captain-General indignantly replied that he had never dreamed of employing a person of such slender abilities "in anything that is of any consequence."² This cruel and rather ungrateful remark was maliciously repeated by Duchess Sarah, and had the effect of driving Somerset into opposition. Harley received him effusively, and flattered him to the top of his bent, even going so far as to hold out hopes that in case of the failure of the House of Brunswick, the succession to the throne might be settled upon that of Seymour.³ On the other hand, St. John took no pains to conceal his dislike for the Duke, and the Jacobite party refused to believe in the latter's good faith. He was, in truth, but a half-hearted Tory at best, and would not have retained office so long as he did but for Harley's flatteries and the private encouragement of Queen Anne. His absurd pride, which found an insult in every contrary argument, his peevish temper, and his variable disposition made him a most undesirable colleague, and it is not

¹ The Whig "Junto," as it was called, consisted of Lords Halifax, Wharton, Sunderland, Somers, and Orford.

² Marlborough's *Works*, vol. x. p. 300.

³ See Swift's *Last Years of the Reign of Queen Anne*, vol. v. p. 182.

surprising that the majority of the Council sympathised with St. John in that minister's attempts to get rid of one who, in the words of Lord Hardwicke, "was so humour-some, proud, and capricious that he was a ministry spoiler rather than a ministry maker." Up to 1710, Somerset was still powerful enough to secure the nomination of Parker to the Chief Justiceship.¹ He imagined, according to Lord Dartmouth, that he could make Parker his tool; but the new Chief Justice speedily disabused him of this idea, and went over to St. John. The Sacheverell agitation, and the Jacobite intrigues of his fellow-councillors, were renewed sources of discontent to Somerset. Bitter recriminations were of daily occurrence between St. John and himself, and at length he even fell foul of the complaisant Harley. The dissolution of Parliament in 1710 was the signal for his final desertion of the Tories. He broke off the connection in a towering rage, which so blinded him to all sense of propriety that he treated the Queen, to whom he owed nothing but gratitude, with grave discourtesy. The occurrence is thus described by Lady Strafford in a letter to her sister: "The Duke of Somerset has left the Court in a pet, and it is concluded that he'll ne'er return as Master of the Horse more. The day the Parliament is dissolved, he came out of Council in such a passion that he cursed and swore at all his servants, and ordered them to put up all things at Kingseton (Kensington),² and though his supper was ready he would not stay to eat it. . . .

"The Saturday morning he went out of Town, the Queen herself gave orders that the leading coach only should go out with her . . . so the Duke of S. might be at liberty to take the best of the horse chariots and horses to travel with; but he continued to the last in a huff, and went out of Town in his own coach, and not through St. James Park, which as Master of the Horse he might do. They say he has been deceived by Mr. Harley. . . . He

¹ In succession to Chief Justice Holt.

² Where he had apartments in his official capacity.

has met the Junto, and they received him very cordially, and declared he will give all the interest he has in any place he has influence in to the Whigs."¹

The "Junto" was doubtless glad to welcome back its old adherent, even though he came not as a penitent but as a disappointed man. The Whigs in 1711 needed all the help they could obtain, to combat Harley and St. John—the latter now in direct communication with St. Germain, the former amazingly popular by reason of the murderous attack made upon him by Guiscard. In Parliament the Tories had a decided majority; Mrs. Masham had succeeded in ousting the Duchess of Marlborough from the post of Queen's favourite; and the prospects of the Hanoverian succession looked darker than at any time since the passing of the Act of Settlement. Thus Somerset's return to the Whig fold was a subject for jubilation. But, truth to tell, it was not so much for the Duke's own merits or influence as for those of his wife, that Sunderland, Somers, and Halifax gave him such cordial greeting. Of Somerset they could not be certain for any length of time; he might leave them in the lurch to-morrow, as he had done before. But the Duchess was a powerful and, above all, a loyal and disinterested ally. For her sake they were willing to forgive and forget, nay even to admit the Duke to all but their most intimate councils. At the accession of Queen Anne, the heiress of the Percies had been appointed first Lady of the Bedchamber. In this capacity she had greatly strengthened that friendship with the Queen which began at Syon in 1682. It was part of Anne's policy to keep about her two sets of favourites, the one to be used as a foil against the other. While the Duchess of Marlborough ostentatiously exercised her sway over Court affairs, she of Somerset was the repository of the Queen's continual complaints on the score of "Mrs. Freeman's arbitrary conduct"; and the quiet sympathy of one who had, apparently, little or nothing to gain in the

¹ *Stratford Papers*, 1710.

royal service, proved grateful to Anne's weak nature. When Marlborough's wife was forced into retirement by the intrigues of Harley's tool, Mrs. Masham, the latter discovered for the first time the great, though passive, influence exercised by the Duchess of Somerset. Here was a woman who asked no benefits for her husband or herself, but who patiently, and almost insensibly, undid the work of Harley and St. John and inspired the Queen with Hanoverian sympathies. "She was," writes Noble,¹ "the determined enemy of the Tory party, and her attachment to the Whigs (afterwards) brought her into great estimation in the reign of George I." It was not long before Mrs. Masham and her friends realised that the success of their schemes depended in no small degree upon the removal of this dangerous obstacle. But at first the Queen would not hear of dismissing her friend in this manner. The Duchess of Somerset was promoted to the joint offices of Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes, in succession to the Duchess of Marlborough,² and she held them in spite of backstairs' cabals, evil reports, and 'cruel lampoons, for over three years. The Queen's personal goodwill she retained to the very last. Anne, when dying, told Lord Dartmouth that she proposed to leave a few of her jewels to the Queen of Sicily, "who was the only relation I ever heard her speak of with much tenderness; and the rest to the Duchess of Somerset, as the fittest person to wear them after her."³

Amongst those who reviled the Duchess most bitterly was Swift, who was then St. John's chief henchman and adviser. He wrote of her to Stella as "that damned Duchess of Somerset," and on one occasion he permitted himself to attack her good fame in a rhymed libel of an exceptionally provoking character. This was the famous "Windsor Prophecy," a parody on those vague predictions which were hawked about the streets in broadsides and almanacs. No one at all familiar with Court matters

¹ *Biog. History*, vol. iii. p. 437.

² In January 1711.

³ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 31.

could fail to grasp the allusions in this precious piece of blackguardism, which ran as follows :—

"The Windsor Prophecy.

*"And, dear Englonde, if ought I understond,
Beware of Carrots from Northumberland !
Carrots soon Thynn, a deeper root may get
If so be they are in Somer set.
Their Conyngs mark thou ; for I have been told
They assasine when young, and poison when old.
Root out these Carrots, O thou whose name
Is, backwards and forwards, always the same ;¹
And keep close to thee always that name
Which backwards and forwards is almost the same ;²
And Englonde, would'st thou be happy still,
Bury those Carrots under a Hill."*³

Thirty years had passed since the murder of Thomas Thynn by the agents of Count Köningsmarck ; and the world had almost forgotten those scandalous and improbable tales which held Elizabeth Percy responsible for the crime. From 1681 to 1711, her life had been such as to merit the respect of all men, even of her political enemies ; nor had one tittle of evidence been brought forward in support of the foul charge which Thynn's friends had levelled against her in the first heat of their anger. Yet, after the lapse of all these years, when the cruel story seemed buried in oblivion, the Duchess found herself suddenly confronted with it anew. Swift, searching among the graves of the past for some weapon with which to wound her, had unearthed this poisoned shaft, steeped it in venom anew, and savagely driven it home. His keen insight into human nature inspired him with the sneer at his victim's personal appearance. He knew that the phrase "*Carrots from Northumberland*" would sting deeply and lastingly, whereas the terrible accusation of murder might perhaps miss of its full effect in the opinion of

¹ Anne.

² Masham.

³ Mrs. Masham's maiden name was Abigail Hill.

the new generation. The mock prophecy written, he was so pleased with its malignity that he had it printed for distribution among his associates of the "Brothers' Club"—hard-drinking Tories all, who toasted Abigail Masham, and damned "Northumberland Carrots" as vigorously as the Dean himself. He brought a copy of the verses with great pride to Mrs. Masham herself, imagining that that lady would be delighted with them. But the Queen's favourite was a shrewder politician than the great satirist. She foresaw that the very strength of the poison would prove its own antidote; and that Anne's womanly sympathies were almost certain to be enlisted on the side of the very person they sought to injure. Rather sulkily Swift admitted the justice of this reasoning, and hastened to stop the issue of his "Prophecy." He was too late. The printer, mistaking his orders, had already struck off a number of copies, and sent them to the members of the "Brothers' Club."¹ Before nightfall the spiteful doggerel was the talk of all the coffee-houses. Some one sent the Duchess of Somerset a copy, and she hastened with it to the Queen's apartments, where (so the story goes) she threw herself upon her knees before Anne, her eyes streaming with tears, and prayed for vengeance upon her traducer. Up to that time, Swift had been looked upon as almost certain to succeed to the Bishopric of Hereford. The impassioned pleading of the Duchess is said to have deprived him of this dignity. A few days after the premature publication of the first lampoon² he wrote a sequel, in which he tells how

*"angry Somerset her vengeance vows,
On Swift's reproaches for her — spouse ;³
From her red locks, her mouth with venom fills,
And thence into the royal ear instils."*

Swift complaining of "venom" is as "Satan reproving sin."

¹ Swift's *Journal to Stella*, in which the whole affair is described.

² It was published in December 1711.

³ The hiatus was supposed to be filled with the word "*slaughter'd*."

Learning a lesson from the failure of the "Windsor Prophecy," the Tories abandoned lampoons, and used more insidious means to discredit the Duchess of Somerset with the Queen. Since his retirement from office, Somerset had maintained a secret correspondence with Hanover, and it was largely due to his indiscreet advice that the Elector sent over his envoy, Schutz, to demand for Prince George a seat in the British House of Lords, under the recently conferred title of Duke of Cambridge. Anne was furiously indignant at this proposal, banished Schutz from her Court, and informed the Elector and his son that any further attempt to gain a foothold in England, during her lifetime, would seriously endanger the Hanoverian succession.¹ Harley and Mrs. Masham assured the Queen that the Duchess of Somerset had been as much involved in this intrigue as her husband, and a serious estrangement took place between Anne and her Mistress of the Robes. Naturally the Tories were delighted; and Swift wrote to Stella that "the damned Duchess of Somerset" was about to follow her Grace of Marlborough into obscurity. At Court, among those who gave less thought to politics than to the private virtues, a good deal of regret was experienced; and Lady Strafford wrote to her brother, "If the Duchess must out, she will leave Court with a very good grace, for everybody is pleased with her good breeding and civility."² She resigned her offices only a few weeks before the crisis which resulted in Harley's downfall, and the brief supremacy of St. John and the Jacobites. The pain of this separation from one whom she looked upon as a genuine friend, unquestionably preyed upon the Queen's health, and went far to hasten the end of her life. She never saw the Duchess of Somerset again; but we know that she remembered her with tenderness upon her deathbed.

The chances of the Hanoverian succession now trembled

¹ Hume.

² *Strafford Papers*, 2nd series; Lady Strafford to her brother, June 1714.

The Duchess
dismissed
from Court:
Somerset
sides with
the Elector.

in the balance. It was believed that the Chevalier de St. George had reached London in disguise, and stood ready at a moment's notice to take the crown from the hands of his dying sister. Marlborough had effected an alliance with Bolingbroke, and hurried home to share in the triumph of a new Restoration. In this emergency, the Duchess of Somerset showed herself to the full the "bold, imperious woman" described by Stanhope.¹ Her extraordinary energy in the Hanoverian cause nerved even her irresolute, capricious lord to action. The Elector was warned of what was meditated against him; and a plan was concerted between the Dukes of Shrewsbury, Argyll, and Somerset to set Bolingbroke's deep-laid schemes at naught. On July 30 Somerset and Argyll forced their way, unsummoned and unannounced, into the Council Chamber at Kensington, and insisted on "offering their advice" to the assembled ministers. Their confederate, Shrewsbury, welcomed them; the Jacobites were apparently paralysed by the unlooked for attack, and—the Queen's lethargy having left her for a brief interval—Shrewsbury received the Treasurer's staff, and with it the practical control of the nation. Anne expired a few hours later; and no sooner had the breath left her body than the Hanoverian envoy "produced an instrument, in the handwriting of the Elector, nominating eighteen peers, who, according to the Regency Bill, were to act as Lords Justices till his arrival."² The Duke of Somerset was naturally one of these, the remainder being nearly all Whigs of known fidelity to the new sovereign. Thus peaceably was contrived the defeat of the legitimist party. Bolingbroke had been fairly beaten at his own game; and it is not too much to assert that the Duchess of Somerset had laboured as stoutly and as successfully to further the Elector's succession, as her ancestor, the "Wizard Earl," had done to place James of Scotland upon

¹ Hume.

² They included the Dukes of Shrewsbury and Argyll, with Lords Halifax, Cowper, and Townshend. Neither Marlborough nor Somers was among them.

the throne. In the sequel, the House of Brunswick certainly showed itself more grateful than the House of Stuart.

After his arrival in England, George I. reinstated the Duke of Somerset in his old office of Master of the Horse. The Duchess was also offered a place at Court, but she declined it, ostensibly on the ground of bad health, but really because she could not bring herself to associate with the Duchess of Kendal and others of the King's German favourites. In this respect she showed herself more squeamish than her grand-daughter, the Duchess of Northumberland, who afterwards paid court to Lady Yarmouth, the mistress of George II. She lived, during the remainder of her life, either at Northumberland House or Petworth; not caring for Syon, which she termed "a hobble-de-hoy place, neither town nor country." Unlike her daughter-in-law, the wife of Lord Hertford,¹ she was far from being a "blue-stocking," although early in her life many books had been dedicated to her.² Her union with Somerset had been one of convenience rather than of affection; but she made him a patient and devoted consort, while he, on the other hand, is said to have treated her "with little gratitude or affection." After seeing all her surviving children happily settled, this great lady died at Petworth on November 23, 1722, in the fifty-sixth year of her age. She had borne her husband thirteen children in all, but of these only four reached maturity. Her son and successor, Algernon, Earl of Hertford, demands an extended notice, as the recognised heir of the House of Percy. Of her three

Death of the
Duchess:
Somerset's
insane pride.

¹ Afterwards seventh Duke of Somerset.

² One of these dedications demands mention, from the extraordinarily fulsome nature of the compliments bestowed upon her. It was that placed by Banks before the first edition of his tragedy, "Anna Bullen." Addressing the Duchess as "Illustrious Princess," the playwright continues: "You have submitted to take a noble partner, as angels have delighted to converse with men. . . . There is so much of divinity and wisdom in your choice, that none but the Almighty ever did the like, with the world and Eden for a dower."

daughters, one married Sir William Wyndham,¹ afterwards Secretary for War, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; another, Henry O'Brien, who subsequently succeeded to the Earldom of Thomond,² in Ireland; and a third, Peregrine Osborne, third Duke of Leeds. After the death of his first Duchess, Somerset married (1725-6) Lady Charlotte Finch, daughter of the Tory leader, Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, by whom he had two daughters. When the subtle, restraining influence of Duchess Elizabeth was removed, his extravagant vanity began at once to overrun the bounds of decency and reason. A hundred stories are told of his arrogance, and of the ridiculous situations into which it frequently betrayed him. When his second wife ventured to attract his attention by tapping him with her fan, he rebuked her with the absurd remark: "Madam, my first Duchess was a Percy, and *she* never took such a liberty." He never permitted any of his children to remain seated in his presence, and while dozing, in somewhat undignified fashion, after dinner, the two daughters of Lady Charlotte Finch were compelled to stand patiently beside the paternal chair. On one occasion the elder of these young ladies, overcome by weariness, was daring enough to sit down; whereupon the Duke, waking up suddenly, told the culprit that "her undutiful conduct and lack of respect would cost her a fortune." That very day he added a codicil to his will, by which he mulcted her of the sum of £20,000.³ His servants were forbidden to open their lips in his presence, save by special permission, and his orders were, for the most part, conveyed by signs. When he

¹ This was Pope's

"Wyndham, just to freedom and the throne,
The master of our passions, and his own."

He was the third Baronet of Orchard Wyndham, co. Somerset, and father, by Lady Katherine Seymour, of the first Earl of Egremont, as well as of Percy Wyndham O'Brien, created first Earl of Thomond.

² He was grandson and heir of the seventh Earl of Thomond.

³ Horace Walpole; *Correspondence*, vols. i. and ii. The victim of this piece of tyranny was Lady Charlotte Seymour, who afterwards married the third Earl of Aylesford.

travelled, the roads for leagues ahead were "scoured by outriders to protect him from the vulgar gaze." His pride, far from producing the impression he imagined, was generally looked upon as a form of lunacy. Horace Walpole never tired of ridiculing the pompous caprices in which he indulged; and Anthony Henley stung him almost to fury by waggishly addressing a letter "*To the Duke of Somerset, over against the Trunk-Shop in Charing Cross*"—a jest which "set the Town laughing for many a day." With the King, Somerset was soon at loggerheads. The coarse pleasures in which George I. delighted, and the vulgar persons with whom he chose to surround himself, disgusted the Duke; and there were frequent quarrels between the monarch and his Master of the Horse. Sir William Wyndham, Somerset's favourite son-in-law, having been committed to the Tower on a charge of corresponding with the exiled Stuarts, the Duke asked permission to bail him out. This George refused; upon which Somerset expressed his indignation in no measured terms. Furious at such conduct upon the part of a subject, the King ordered him from his presence; and next day, before the Duke could save his dignity by resigning, he found himself ignominiously dismissed from his post at Court. During the remainder of the reign he strove to repay himself for this humiliation by encouraging the Prince of Wales in all his disputes with the King.

As the end of his life drew near, Somerset's egotism and ill-temper became almost unbearable. His estates were grossly mismanaged (especially those situated in the North), because he could induce no self-respecting agents to enter his service; and he had even succeeded in making an enemy of his own son and heir by a long series of tyrannical acts, culminating in a peculiarly wanton piece of cruelty. He died, little regretted, at Petworth on December 2, 1748; and was buried in Salisbury Cathedral, where a statue by Rysbrack has been erected to his memory. Perhaps the most charitable view to take of the latter part of his life, is that his mind had become slightly

deranged, and that at times he was not responsible for his actions. It is asserted by one of his biographers¹ that he was a lover of the arts ; but beyond the facts that he once attempted to patronise Joseph Addison, that his portrait was painted by Kneller, and that he was an honorary member of the Kit-Kat Club, there seems nothing to substantiate this statement.

Algernon Seymour, third Baron Percy² and seventh Duke of Somerset, was born at Petworth on November 11, 1684. He inherited much of his mother's sound common-sense ; and with it a certain easy good-nature and a lack of ambition, which made him one of the most popular noblemen of his day, while, at the same time, preventing him from taking any important part in public affairs. His disposition, in fact, was as likeable as that of his father had been the reverse ; and beyond an occasional fondness for the bottle, which was the besetting sin of his generation, he seems to have been practically free from vicious traits. At one time it seemed probable that he would have for tutor a famous man addicted to similar indulgences. The Duke of Somerset, learning that Mr. Joseph Addison was a discreet and deserving scholar, sent in his loftiest manner to inform that young gentleman that he "had been selected" to act as instructor and travelling companion to his Grace's son and heir. Addison, instead of being at all impressed by this honour, requested the Duke to state what salary he was prepared to pay for his services ; and on learning the amount proposed, declared it quite insufficient, and broke off negotiations forthwith. Somerset was so amazed by this quiet snub, that he endured it in angry silence ; and he is said to have hated literary men ever afterwards.

In May 1708 the Earl of Hertford (such was the title by which he was known) joined the army at Brussels, serving in the capacity of aide-de-camp to the Duke of

¹ Mackey.

² Of the writ of 1625.

Marlborough. He fought at Oudenarde (where the Electoral Prince, afterwards George II., also won his first laurels), and was selected by Marlborough to carry home the news of that decisive victory. Later in the year, he was again the bearer of welcome tidings from the Commander-in-Chief. "This afternoon," says the *Royal Gazette* of November 26,¹ the Right Hon^{ble} the Earl of Hartford arrived here express from his Grace the Duke of Marlborough to Her Majesty, with an account that his Grace had passed the Scheldt and relieved the town of Brussels, which was besieged by the late Elector of Bavaria. His Lordship was received by the Queen with great distinction."

Early in 1709, Hertford was promoted to the command of the 15th Regiment of Foot, and in June he took part in the great but costly triumph of Malplaquet. His active military career ended in 1713 with the Peace of Utrecht; but he continued to hold rank in the regular army until 1742. With the accession of George I. he shared in the favour bestowed by that monarch upon the great Whig families, and was appointed captain and lieutenant-colonel of the 2nd troop of Horse Guards.² In the same year he married Frances Thynn, daughter and co-heir of the Hon. Henry Thynn, and grandchild and co-heir of Thomas, first Viscount Weymouth.³ This match was fostered by the Duchess of Somerset (who desired to see her only son married) but opposed by the Duke. What reasons the latter had for disliking his daughter-in-law do not appear. He may have been capricious enough to object to the name of

¹ 4492 (British Museum Library).

² In 1715. He was promoted to the full colonelcy of the regiment in 1740.

³ This lady was a cousin of the unfortunate "Tom of Ten Thousand," whose property her grandfather had inherited. With her sister Mary, wife of William Greville, Lord Brooke, she was co-heir of the first Viscount Weymouth (died 1714), and of his only son Henry (died 1708). Her mother was Grace, daughter and heir of Sir George Strode, Knt., Sergeant-at-Law, by Anne Wyndham (one of the interminable Wyndham family which at this time succeeded in mixing itself up so profitably in the family affairs of the Percies, Seymours, Thynns, and O'Briens).

Thynn, in consequence of the old scandal recently revived by Dean Swift ; or Lady Hertford may have offended him by her independent disposition, and the pleasure which she took in the society of artists and men of letters. Hertford manfully took his wife's side in the family quarrels which followed his marriage, and for years the Duke was barely upon speaking terms with his heir. As for the young couple, they lived together very happily in spite of the striking contrast presented by their characters and pursuits. The Countess was a typical "blue-stocking," as one may judge from her published correspondence.¹ These letters, written in the affected style of the day, yet evincing not a little talent and power of expression, were addressed chiefly to Lady Pomfret² and Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, the dramatist. She also published a small volume of verse, in which the rhymes were correct and the sentiments beyond reproach. Thomson dedicated to her the first of his four "Seasons," the opening lines of which are :—

"Oh Hertford, fitted for to shine in Courts,
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation joined
In soft assemblage, listen to my song."

Arising out of this address, Dr. Johnson tells an amusing anecdote in his "Lives of the Poets." "'Spring' was published next year," he says, "with a dedication to the Countess of Hertford, whose practice it was to invite every summer some poet into the country to hear her verses and assist her studies. This honour was one summer conferred upon Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with Lord Hertford and his friends than in assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons."³ These country visits were paid to Alnwick Castle, a small portion of which the Duke of Somerset had

¹ The *Letters of Frances, Duchess of Somerset*, were edited in 1805 by William Bingley.

² Henrietta Louisa Fermor, Countess of Pomfret, a famous "blue."

³ *Life of Thomson*.

grudgingly made habitable for his son. Among the other poets who were invited to enact the delicate part of mentor to Lady Hertford, were Shenstone and Richard Savage. Despite his strange, wayward nature, Savage seems to have been successful in winning the regard of his patroness; and when he was under sentence of death for homicide committed during a drunken brawl in March 1728, it was through the intercession of Lady Hertford with the Queen that he obtained a pardon. The Countess was appointed a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline soon after her husband became a peer. This event occurred in 1722, on the death of the Duchess of Somerset, when he inherited the Percy Barony of 1624, but was permitted, through ignorance on the part of the authorities, to take his seat according to the precedency of the ancient Barony by writ of 27 Edward I. (1299). It was also falsely claimed that he had inherited the dormant Baronies of Poynings, Fitz-Payn, and Bryan; and this claim was repeated in the case of his daughter, the first Duchess of Northumberland. Hertford had been appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Sussex and Wiltshire in 1715; to these he subsequently added the lieutenancy of Northumberland, in which county he was deservedly popular, as the first of the old Percy blood to reside at Alnwick Castle for over one hundred years. In a North-Country poem of the time, he is thus flatteringly described:—

“Now Percy’s name no more doth fill the North;
Hartford succeeds in honour, fame, and worth,
Seymour and Percy both in him unite,
He a good patriot, and a hardy Knight.”¹

Notwithstanding the frequent attempts of the Duke of Somerset to embitter their relations, the Hertfords and their children formed a particularly happy and united family. The only son of the marriage, George, Lord

¹ *Cheviot*; a poetical fragment, *temp.* 1722-29; edited by John Adamson, Esq., of Newcastle, 1817.

Beauchamp, was born in 1725; while the only daughter, Lady Elizabeth Seymour, had first seen the light in 1716. There was thus a difference of nine years between brother and sister; a difference which was in itself an added bond of tenderness, for Lady Betty¹ made a playmate and companion of her brother from his infancy upwards, whereas, had they been more nearly of an age, their ways must soon have parted. A manuscript account of the pleasant, almost idyllic life led by parents and children, and of the confidence and affection which prevailed amongst them, was compiled by William Comslade, a member of the household at this period. Lady Betty Seymour spent a great part of her youth in the North Country or in Wiltshire, far from the distractions of London; which may account for the fact that her first (and last) serious love-affair did not occur until she was twenty-two. At this age her grandmother had already been married for over five years, and was the mother of four children; but it must be remembered that Lady Betty Seymour was not (at this period) a great heiress like Elizabeth Percy. Indeed she could not properly be described as an heiress at all. Her brother was alive and in robust health. Her own fortune was not more than £10,000; and this did not come to her, except by special arrangement, until after her grandfather's death. Moreover the terms of the Seymour-Percy marriage settlements were unknown, save to the old Duke and his lawyers; and it was believed that a great portion of the family property would pass away from the direct line into the hands of the Wyndhams, for whom Somerset evinced a decided predilection. These considerations prevented Lady Betty from being eagerly sought after by the fortune-hunters of her day; while, at the same time, they inspired a young Yorkshire baronet, Sir Hugh Smithson by name, with the hope of winning her for a wife.

¹ By this diminutive she was known to her friends, even after her succession to the Earldom in 1750.

It was at the old manor-house of Swillington,¹ near Leeds, that Hugh Smithson's courtship began. Lady Betty was staying at this place with the wife of Sir William Lowther,² who being herself without children, found great pleasure in the society of young people. Swillington, indeed, was known throughout the West and North Ridings as a famous house for match-making, and one in which the prevalent country pursuits of fox-hunting, coursing, and cock-fighting were but secondary considerations. The honest Yorkshire squires were not a little afraid of Lady Lowther, who had the reputation of being a "blue," and belonged to the clever Countess of Pomfret's coterie when she went up to London with Sir William for the parliamentary season. Whether Sir Hugh Smithson had been purposely invited to Swillington by this gentle contriver of other people's happiness, or whether he came thither in the ordinary way, it is certain that he speedily fell in love with the charming Betty Seymour, and that he found no difficulty in enlisting Lady Lowther's good offices in his behalf. Nor was the object of this sudden attachment irresponsive. In spite of her maidenly reserve and faint protestations of indifference, it is not difficult to read between the lines of Lady Betty's correspondence with her mother, that she fully reciprocated the feelings of her lover. She saw in him one of the handsomest men of his generation, tall, well-made, and far superior in natural intelligence as well as in education to any of the opposite sex whom she had hitherto met. The fact that he was universally popular, alike with rough country gentlemen and with men of letters, must also have impressed her in his favour. He was as far

¹ Swillington was at this time a picturesque, rambling mansion. It has since been rebuilt, and greatly enlarged.

² She was Sir William's second wife, and the daughter of Sir William Ramsden, second Bart., of Byrom and Longley, co. York. Her husband belonged to a branch of the Lowthers of Cumberland, and was M.P. for Pontefract. At his death *s.p.* in 1763, Swillington was bequeathed to the Lowthers, afterwards Lords Lonsdale, from whom it descended in the cadet line to the present Sir Charles Bingham Lowther, Bart.

from being a coxcomb or a prude, as he was from the opposite extremes of debauchery or boorishness. In fine, he appealed to both sides of Lady Betty's nature ; to her keen intelligence, as well as to her womanly admiration for physical strength and beauty. After a brief courtship, Smithson boldly asked her hand in marriage. Contrary to the custom of the time, he approached the young lady herself, rather than her relatives. It was his plan of action through life to attack the difficulties in his way as directly and with as little loss of time as possible ; and it will be seen that these tactics were in the main successful. Lady Betty was taken completely by surprise, and faltered out a half-hearted refusal, which probably encouraged Smithson more than it daunted him, for he told her that he would not accept it as her final answer. In a flutter of varying emotions, the young lady hastened to confide in her hostess (who probably knew more about the affair than she did herself) ; after which we find her writing to her mother the following dutiful, but perhaps not altogether frank epistle :—

“ SWILLINGTON, 1st October 1739.

“ *My dear Mamma,*

“ *Since I have been capable of corresponding with you at all, I never felt so awkwardly about writing to you as I do at present ; nor indeed had I ever before so odd a subject to write about. However, as I think it necessary to do it, I shall proceed to tell you that Sir Hugh Smithson the other day asked me to let him speak to me, which was to inform me that he designed proposing himself to my Pappa, and would beg Lady Lowther to do it for him.*

“ *You will easily guess how much I was surprised and confounded at so extraordinary a compliment. However, I mustered up my courage, and told him that I could not give my consent to his doing it. He answered that his resolution was taken and he would pursue it. I then said that since that was the case, I was astonished why he mentioned it to me.*

After this he spoke to Lady Lowther, who with her usual goodness and friendship for me, said she could not think of doing it without my consent, which I absolutely refused, and again desired him to drop the whole affair; but all I could prevail upon him was to promise me to defer mentioning it till I came to London.

"I thought it my duty (though Lady Lowther is so obliging as also to write to you) to inform you of this myself, on several accounts, and amongst others because people already talk of it, and I feared, if you should hear it, it might make you and my Pappa uneasy, and perhaps imagine that I might give him some encouragement, which I do assure you I have not; for, besides what I have already reported to you, I told him that, even if it should meet with your approbation and my Pappa's, I should still reserve to myself the power of refusing him. I own I have been not a little uneasy, for fear I should do anything that might be displeasing to either of you; but I hope your answer will tell me the contrary, for I have honestly told you the whole affair, and upon recollection, I cannot find what I could have said different from what I have done.

"I am, dear Mamma,

"Your most obedient and dutiful Daughter,

"E. SEYMOUR." ¹

A day or two later,¹ Lady Betty despatched a sort of postscript to her mother, in which she announced that her "*head was in such a puzzlement,*" when she had penned the above letter, that she feared she had "*talked nonsense.*" No doubt these signs of confusion gave Lady Hertford an inkling of the real state of affairs, which the letter of Lady Lowther presently confirmed. She wrote to her daughter, plainly suggesting that she had not told her the whole truth, and begging her to state freely the nature of her feelings towards Sir Hugh Smithson. The letter concluded with doubts as to whether that gentleman's birth and

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

estate entitled him to seek such an alliance. Seeing that her secret was discovered, Lady Betty made no further attempt at concealment, but admitted that Sir Hugh was the man of her choice. She was also at pains to display his prospects and character in as favourable a light as possible. "*I must,*" she wrote (speaking of the proposal of marriage), "*honestly confess to you that, had it met with my Pappa's approbation and yours, I should very willingly have consented to it. Nay, I shall not scruple to own that I have a partiality for him. His estate, I have been told, will be greater than what I believe you apprehend; and he has an extreme good character. But all this is nothing, and I only mention it to convince you that I would not conceal one thought of my heart from you and my Pappa. To all the rest of the world I hope it will always be so, for I have never opened my lips about it to a mortal. As for Sir Hugh, I am sure he is far from suspecting it. I am therefore still in the same way of thinking that I was before. . . . I would readily sacrifice my own inclinations to your commands.*"¹

It is likely that Sir Hugh was not quite so dull of comprehension in affairs of the heart as his mistress professed to believe him. At any rate he increased, instead of relaxing, his efforts to win her. There were entertainments at Stanwick, his home in the North Riding, to which Lady Betty came under the wing of her hostess, and of which she wrote in terms of subdued rapture. Meanwhile Lord and Lady Hertford had been making inquiries regarding Sir Hugh Smithson, and, on the whole, learning little but good of him. Even their captious friend, Horace Walpole, owned that he possessed "an advantageous manner," and was "extremely popular." As to his estate, he possessed over £4000 a year, practically unencumbered, and was heir to another property worth annually about another £3000. His paternal descent was admittedly plebeian, but through the female line he sprang from the old Catholic aristocracy of the North. Had Lady Betty been at this time the heiress of her family, it is probable that the affair

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

would have been promptly nipped in the bud ; but since such was not the case, her indulgent parents did not wish to show themselves over exacting where they believed her happiness to be concerned. Accordingly a compromise was suggested. The lovers were to endure a complete separation for the space of six months. If, after that time, their mutual affection continued, Lady Hertford promised to consider the match favourably. To this Lady Betty agreed, although, as she told her mother, she was now so deeply in love that she had grave doubts as to her ability to carry out the conditions. "*You say you fear my resolution gives me some pain,*" she wrote, "*and I cannot, without forfeiting the sincerity I have hitherto preserved throughout the whole affair,*¹ *deny that I am not quite easy about it. But let me conjure you not to think of this.*"² The fears thus expressed were soon justified. Her swain's continued absence weighed so heavily on Lady Betty's spirits, that her health was "seriously affected." Greatly alarmed by the news which reached her, Lady Hertford threw prudence to the winds, and promised to receive Sir Hugh Smithson as a son-in-law, if by that means she could effect her daughter's cure. Happiness is a potent medicine ; and Lady Betty became convalescent in a marvellously brief space of time, while the reappearance of her lover at Swillington completely restored her to health and spirits. The complaisance of her parents she repaid by a grateful and affectionate letter of thanks ; while Sir Hugh on his part addressed to Lady Hertford a formal proposal for her daughter's hand, couched in language of which the following is an example :—

"As I was extremely sensible that I had neither fortune nor any other qualification sufficient in itself to procure me so great an honour, my hopes only depended upon Lady Betty being moved in my favour by the sincerity of my love ; the constant regard which I hope she is convinced I will pay in every action of my life to promote her

¹ The writer evidently forgot her rather disingenuous letter of October 1.

² Dated November 1, 1739; *Alnwick MSS.*

pleasure and happiness; and the miseries I must suffer from a disappointment."¹

Letters were also exchanged between Smithson and Lord Hertford; and the matter was looked upon as settled save for the very important item that the sanction of the Duke of Somerset had not yet been obtained. It was felt that considerable diplomacy would have to be exercised in approaching this elderly autocrat, and Lord Hertford for one expressed grave doubts as to the possibility of persuading the Duke to accept a person of Sir Hugh's modest extraction as a fitting consort for his grandchild. There was one point in the lover's favour, however; the Duke took little interest in Lady Betty, all his hopes being centred in her brother, Lord Beauchamp.

It was anticipated that the Duke of Somerset's first question, when referred to in the matter, would deal with the identity of Sir Hugh Smithson, and a statement was accordingly prepared in which the young baronet's origin and circumstances were treated to the best advantage. As, however, much was glossed over or evaded in this account, so as not to arouse the Duke's prejudices, it seems desirable to lay before the reader a more straightforward version of Sir Hugh's family history.

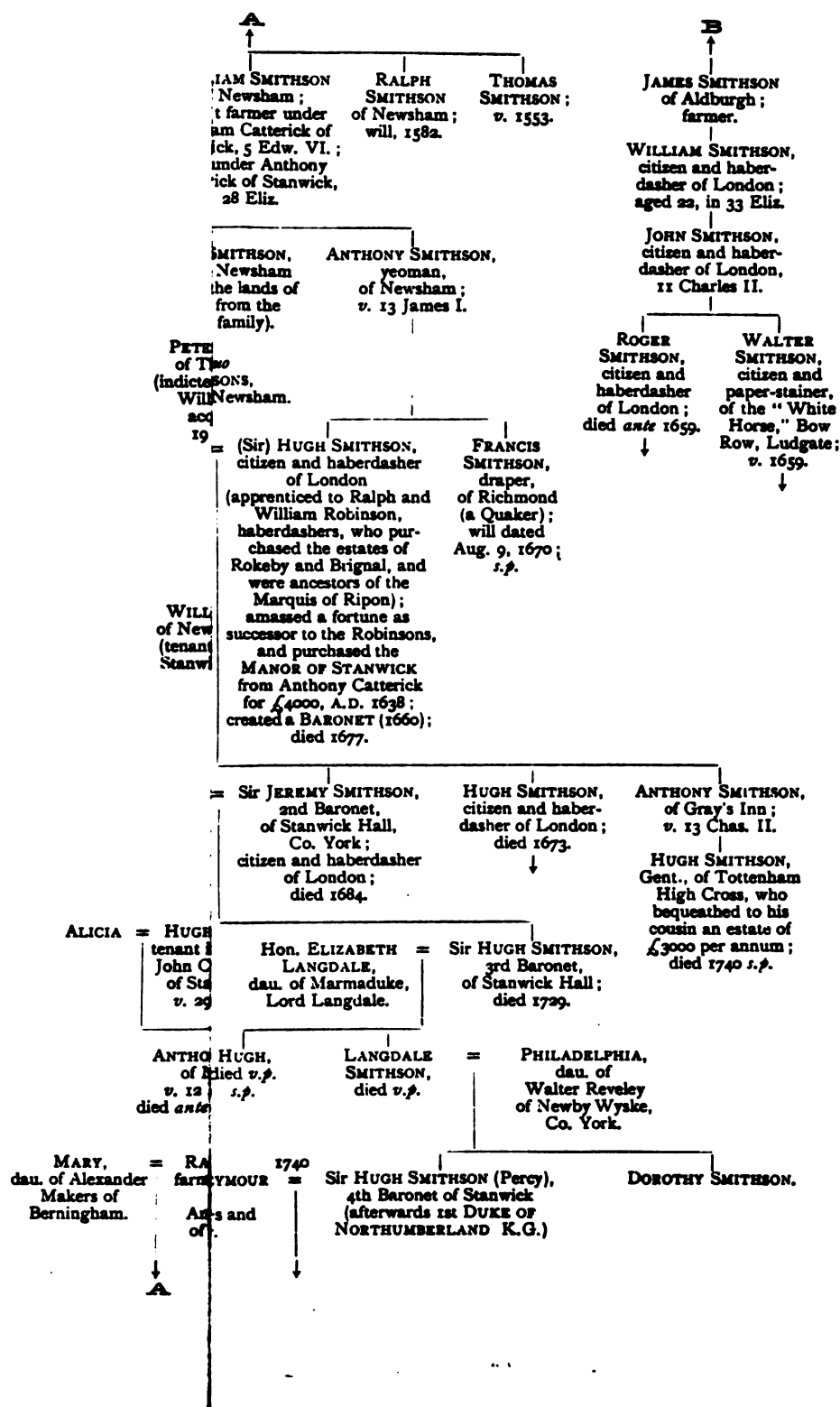
The Smithsons, then, were of a substantial yeoman stock, whose pedigree can be traced back with certainty to the reign of Edward III., and may perhaps be followed to a period long anterior. As will be seen by the accompanying genealogical table, the line is deduced in Harrison's "History of Yorkshire" from one Hugh le Smythe, who held lands at Thornton Watlous, co. York, in the time of Henry II., Richard, and John.² Without doubt General Planta-

The
Smithsons
of Yorkshire
and London.

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

² *The History of Yorkshire*, vol. i. p. 490, &c. This work was compiled by George H. de S. Nevill Plantagenet Harrison, a general in the Argentine service.

GENEALOGY OF SMITHSON—*continued*



of the estates in question, resented the proposal as a slur cast upon his good faith. "*It was true,*" he sturdily declared, "*that he was no Duke, nor boasted of any such great alliances; but in point of honourable dealing he would yield to no man. That he had given his word that he would leave certain of his estates to Sir Hugh Smithson, and that was sufficient: and he would not be tied down by any lawyers.*"¹ The Duke of Somerset made no further attempt to interfere; but he never forgave the Smithson family for thus defying him, and we shall see presently how nearly he succeeded in wreaking a malevolent revenge upon his grandchild and her husband.

Lady Betty Seymour and Sir Hugh Smithson were married on July 18, 1740. A few weeks later we are afforded a glimpse of the happy couple, going in magnificent apparel, to call upon their cousin, Mr. Smithson. Lady Hertford writes to her son, Lord Beauchamp: "*Sir Hugh and Lady Betty went to dine and pay their respects to Mr. Smithson of Tottenham High Cross. Though in the very midst of summer, they were both of them dressed as for a holiday; she in a silver stuff of four pounds a yard, and Sir Hugh in a lead colour and silver stuff coat embroidered with silver, and Waistcoat and Parements of white silk embroidered with silver and colours.*"²

Little Beauchamp (who was now making the "Grand Tour" in care of his tutor) was naturally eager for news of "Betty and her husband," and his mother gratified him to the best of her ability. Sir Hugh, it seemed, had developed a remarkable taste for art, and was busy buying pictures wherewith to decorate the walls of his mansion at Stanwick.³ In his search for talent he had discovered a new painter of English birth, whose work, he declared, rivalled that of Guido. This great genius, Lady Hertford calls "Huby" (or is this an error of her printer?); and

¹ Cowslade's Journal, Alnwick MSS.

² Letters of the Countess of Hertford, 1740.

³ A new hall had taken the place of the old one at Stanwick; but this was in turn to give way to a still larger structure.



177 Elizabeth Countess of Northumberland. S

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she tells her son that "*Sir Hugh has bespoke as many pictures of Huby as will furnish his Salon at Stanwick. He (Huby) is allowed four years to complete them; which I hope he will do, for the owner of the house will never prevail upon himself to hang the work of any other painter by them.*" The mysterious "Huby" was none other than Giles Hussey, whose extraordinary promise and equally extraordinary self-effacement are noticed in Walpole's "*Anecdotes of Painting.*"¹ Sir Hugh showed keen artistic instinct in selecting Hussey, then almost unknown, to paint for him; and he would probably have made his *protégé* famous, if the latter's peculiar temperament had not marred his career.

During the winter of 1740 Mr. Hugh Smithson of Tottenham died, bequeathing, as he had promised, his landed estates to Sir Hugh. The latter was immediately elected M.P. for Middlesex in his cousin's place; and, in the absence of a town house of their own, Lady Betty and he resided for some time in the late Mr. Smithson's villa at High Cross.²

But a death of far more importance to Sir Hugh and his wife took place on September 11, 1744, when George, Lord Beauchamp, heir of the united names of Seymour and Percy, was carried off by smallpox, on the eve of his twenty-first year. After a brief sojourn in England, during which he made the acquaintance of his brother-in-law, young Beauchamp had returned to the Continent in 1742, still in charge of a tutor, Storrocks by name. The autumn of 1744 found the travellers at Bologna, and on September 5th of that year Lord Beauchamp wrote a letter to his mother, in which

Lady Betty
becomes heir
of the
Percies:
spite of old
Somerset.

¹ Giles Hussey (1710-1788), was born at Marnhull in Dorsetshire, of a Roman Catholic family, and educated at Douay and St. Omer. Walpole describes his work as "*equal to very great masters*" (*Anecdotes of Painting*, ii. 318). Sir Hugh Smithson offered him a home for life, and a settled income; but this he refused. He had peculiar theories on the subject of art, and deeming himself misunderstood, abandoned the brush altogether, and died a recluse on the estate of his brother.—*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

² It was known as "the Black House," and stood by the main road, near the Cross of Tottenham (Robinson; *History of Tottenham*).

Louvain, and adopting the patronymic of the noble family whose heiress he had married, and whose recognised chief he had now become. In 1751 he took his seat in the House of Lords and moved the address to the Throne.¹ A year later he became a Lord of the Bedchamber, and received his commissions as Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland and Vice-Admiral of the Northumbrian shore on March 20, 1753. The Garter was conferred upon him in 1756, and this raised an outcry among the friends and adherents of many disappointed peers, who held that "the old nobility"² was degraded by the bestowal of the blue ribbon upon "a person of obscure descent." The truth seems to be that Northumberland, whose sterling worth was everywhere admitted when he was merely Sir Hugh Smithson, had made by his good fortune a host of enemies and envious calumniators. Walpole, who had once borne testimony to his good breeding, now painted him as a vulgar upstart, and delighted in chronicling spiteful stories of his ostentation. We are asked to believe that he spoke of Harry Hotspur as his "ancestor"; and that when Lord March³ visited Alnwick, he received him in state with the remark, "I believe, my lord, this is the first time that ever a Douglas and a Percy met here in friendship." Nor was "Lady Betty" (as she continued to be styled) spared by her husband's critics. Walpole did not like her, and she is variously set down in his "Letters" as "coarse," "ostentatious," and "junketaceous." It was her habit, he declares, to follow the Queen⁴ to the theatre with a longer retinue than her own; and in spite of her apparent frankness, he considered her secretly mischievous. Coarse she certainly was (as indeed were most of the great ladies of the day),

¹ In his speech he had to comment upon the little-regretted demise of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

² It is difficult to divine what was meant by "the old nobility." Of the Plantagenet nobility only scanty remnants were left; and the great majority of the higher titles were held by the descendants of "new men," ennobled in Tudor or Stuart times.

³ Son of the Duke of Queensberry.

⁴ Queen Charlotte, wife of George III., is here alluded to.

and she never shrank from a joke because of its indecency.¹ There is on record an account of a magnificent supper, given by Northumberland and his wife in 1758 (a few months after the Earl had received his Garter) to George II.'s mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth.² The principal ornament on the supper-table represented a Court hunt at Herrenhausen, with a carriage drawn by six prancing steeds, in which sat two figures, one representing the King, and the other Lady Yarmouth. The portraits of these "august personages" were unmistakable; and a contemporary writer describes this trophy as "the apotheosis of concubinage."

Fortunately for their own peace of mind, both Earl and Countess were plentifully endowed with good humour, and never allowed themselves to show resentment at the attacks of the envious. As nothing mean or dishonourable was ever alleged against either of them, they may be said to have come particularly well through the fires of criticism.

From the first, Earl Hugh showed himself an excellent landlord. Allusion has been made to the wretched state into which the northern estates of the Percies had been allowed to fall, through the carelessness or incapacity of the Duke of Somerset. Those wide tracts had in fact been little better than waste for half a century. The houses of the tenants were in ruins, the woods had been ruthlessly cut down for fuel, agriculture itself had fallen into disuse. The new Earl remembered what William *Als-germons* had done for Yorkshire, and resolved to do likewise for Northumberland. "He found the country almost a desert," says Collins, "and he clothed it with woods and improved it with agriculture." Every year for twenty years he is said to have planted over 1200 trees, until the once desolate region began to assume a warm and sheltered aspect. The ruined cottages were rebuilt or repaired, and an intricate system

¹ The curious will find many examples of this trait of "Lady Betty" in the works of Walpole and his contemporaries.

² Sophia de Walmoden, Lady Yarmouth, was the last mistress of an English king to receive a peerage.

of drainage helped to reclaim the marshy districts. The Earl imported fruit-trees and flowers, many of them belonging to species until then quite unknown in England. To such an extent did he improve the estates which his wife had brought him, that in less than thirty years—from 1749 to 1778—the rent-roll had leaped, without any extra burdens being laid upon the tenants, from £8607 to £50,000 *per annum*. A large portion of this increase was due to the mines, which Northumberland developed enormously.

At the outset of his political career, Northumberland attached himself zealously to the party of Lord Bute (to whose daughter his elder son, Lord Percy, was subsequently married); and in order to please Bute he accepted, in 1762, the inferior post of Lord Chamberlain to Queen Charlotte. In this capacity he became a member of the private junta known as "the King's Friends,"¹ and was sworn of the Privy Council. His fine presence and engaging manners rendered him so acceptable to both King and Queen, that on March 17, 1763, Henry Fox suggested to Bute the advisability of making him Privy Seal.² Only a month later, however, Bute's Ministry fell; and Grenville, who succeeded, looked upon Northumberland as an ambitious upstart, and disliked him accordingly. Still the royal favour was sufficient to secure for the young Earl the viceroyalty of Ireland, which was entrusted to him early in 1763. He was popular in Ireland, where his policy was as conciliatory as existing conditions permitted, and where the people long remembered him as "the *faidheamhlach*" Lord-Lieutenant." So great was his expenditure at Dublin Castle, and so magnificent the hospitality which he maintained, that Horace Walpole accused him of vulgar ostentation.³ In one brief parliamentary season over 1400 dozens of rare wine were drunk at the

¹ "The King's Friends" met secretly at Andrew Stone's house in the Privy Gardens.

² Fitzmaurice's *St. James*, i. 198.

³ This expressive Gaelic word, pronounced much like "fo'hookach") signifies literally "princely," but is used to imply prodigality, or wastefulness.

⁴ *General's Papers*, iii. 112.

viceregal table,¹ and the castle became a species of club, where open house was kept, where all shades of political opinion mingled freely, and where eating, drinking, gambling, and love-making went on from morning till night.

Meanwhile the King had wearied of Grenville's government, and its opposition to his pet project of enlarging the powers of the Crown. When Northumberland visited England, early in 1765, he was at once sent for by King George, who employed him in a political intrigue aimed at the overthrow of Grenville, and the formation of "a strong and lasting administration" made up of the principal Whigs. The Earl was ordered to put himself into immediate communication with the Duke of Cumberland, whose advice and aid he was to solicit. His first interview with the victor of Culloden took place at Newmarket, where he led the conversation dexterously from the safe subjects of horses and hounds, to the dangerous ones of plots and politics. Cumberland seems to have been as much impressed by his plausible manners as the King had been, and readily promised his help in the projected change of ministers. Pitt and Temple were next approached, and enlisted in their turn—the former willingly, the latter with some reluctance. Every effort was made to keep Northumberland's connection with the intrigue a secret, but the truth leaked out before long. In Grenville's Diary, under date of March 15, 1765, we read: "Lord Northumberland is known to have been on Saturday night with the King, who waited for him in the garden, and let him in himself. He stayed but a very short time, returned to London, and soon after the Duke of Cumberland came to Richmond. There have been several meetings at Northumberland House."² So pleased was the King with Northumberland's skill in the character of Mercury, that, as the prospects of a new Ministry grew more rosy, he proposed to place the Irish Viceroy at its head. The Earl, his Majesty suggested, should be First

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*

² *Grenville Papers (Diary).*

Lord of the Treasury in succession to Grenville, with Pitt and Charles Townshend as Secretaries of State, and Temple as Lord Privy Seal. Temple, who looked upon Northumberland as a mere henchman of Lord Bute, violently resented this proposal, and refused to accept office. Pitt, while he admitted that the Earl deserved reward for his services, was equally firm in opposing his elevation to the responsible office of Prime Minister;¹ and so the negotiations ceased, and Northumberland went back to Dublin Castle. But not for long. Grenville lost no time in revenging himself, and before the summer was over the Earl was dismissed from the viceroyalty in favour of Lord Hertford.²

Next year, when Pitt at length succeeded in forming a government "under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Grafton," the King (more moderate in his wishes) desired that Northumberland should be made Lord Chamberlain. Hertford was, however, appointed to that post, thus supplanting the Earl for the second time within twelve months. Northumberland protested warmly to Pitt (now Lord Chatham), setting forth his services in Ireland, and his useful work against Grenville. All this the new minister freely admitted, but as he had "no post of sufficient importance to offer to one of my lord of Northumberland's rank and great estate," he advised the Earl to sue for a step in the peerage, promising to exert all his influence with the King to further such a request. It was Chatham's belief, and that of the King as well, that Northumberland would rest content with a marquissate, which was considered a great dignity for one who had risen, chiefly by chance, and in a very short space of time, from the rank of a modest country gentleman. But in this anticipation the sovereign and his adviser reckoned without the ambition and astuteness of Earl Hugh. The latter realised that any step which he should now succeed in obtaining might be the last that the

¹ See *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 240.

² Francis Ingram Seymour, second Marquis of Hertford.

King could be prevailed upon to grant in his favour. Therefore he resolved to demand as much as possible while yet the opportunity remained. When a special audience was allotted to him, he leisurely summed up his various services, and with great composure asked the complaisant monarch for a dukedom. At this, we are told, "the King coloured and looked embarrassed ; said he must take some little time to consider what engagements he was under ; and named Lord Cardigan. He then withdrew to his closet, from which he returned in a short time and told Lord Northumberland that he would make him a Duke."¹

As a matter of fact, the King took longer in making up his mind than we are here given to suppose, and certainly consulted Chatham before granting Northumberland's daring request. The Prime Minister, although at first greatly astonished, kept his word by reporting favourably upon the matter. George's own version of the audience is as follows: "I told him (the Earl) that his request for a Dukedom was new to me, that I could give him no other answer than that I would consider of it ; that I had thought he only looked up to a Marquisate. He said that was a more modern rank in the English peerage ; that what he asked was the old title of Lady Northumberland's family ; that if he succeeded he would never be an applier for public employments. I then concluded with assuring him that he should know my decision to-morrow. Undoubtedly few peers have so great an estate in point of income, and scarce any in point of extent, therefore if you will co-operate with me in declaring I don't mean by this to open a door for the creating of many Dukes, I will consent to it."² According to the Duke of Grafton, Northumberland, inspired by his wife's descent from the princely house of Louvain, and desirous of commemorating that semi-royal ancestry, was inclined rather to despise the ancient territorial dignity of the Percies, and to insist that his promised duchy

¹ *Granville Papers*, iii. 384.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 74.

should be that of Brabant. Of course such a title was out of the question and could not be conferred by an English monarch. Wiser counsels prevailed, and in the end the Earl was satisfied to become Duke of Northumberland. On October 4, 1766, Grafton wrote to Chatham: "Lord Northumberland was yesterday created Duke of Northumberland, Earl Percy, and Viscount Louvaine, the last of which Mr. Conway had the address to persuade him from adding as a second Dukedom, as he before had of getting him to change the title he first asked, that of Duke Brabant."¹

Among the nobility, the new creation was most unpopular. Over fifty years had elapsed since a dukedom (other than royal) had been added to the English peerage, and the old taunts respecting his Smithson descent were flung in Northumberland's face by a hundred hostile critics. He received these attacks with his usual imperturbability of temper, and self-satisfaction is a buckler which blunts the keenest arrows. Having nothing more to expect at the hands of the King, or Lord Bute (whose secret influence still prevailed), he gradually withdrew from the Court party, and renounced the doctrine of absolutism. From the first he was in sympathy with the discontented American colonists; and we find him voting against the obnoxious Stamp Act, and subsequently in favour of its repeal. Like Chatham, he strenuously opposed the American War, and replied with contempt to those who accused him of lack of patriotism in regard to that disastrous and unnecessary strife. Indeed he tried to compel his son's resignation from the army, rather than allow the latter to serve against the insurgents. Lord Percy, however, while sharing his father's dislike of the war party and their short-sighted policy, felt bound in honour to lead his regiment to the front.

An evidence of Northumberland's political generosity

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 88. As a matter of fact the title of Lovaine of Alnwick (Baron, not Viscount) was not conferred until January 28, 1784.

may be found in his connection with the Wilkes affair and its sequel. His son had been M.P. for Westminster from 1764 until the election of 1767, when the seat was contested by Wilkes's candidates. The Duke used all his influence as Lord-Lieutenant of Middlesex against Wilkes, while the Duchess entered into the bitter contest with infinite zest. We learn from Horace Walpole that the famous demagogue had been sweeping all before him, until he encountered a formidable Amazon "who, although not an Arc or a Pucelle, is a true Joan in spirit, style, and manner. This is Her Grace of Northumberland, who has carried the mob of Wilkes from him, sitting daily in the midst of Covent Garden, and there setting her son, Lord Percy, and Lord Thomas Clinton, against Wilkes's two candidates, Lord Mahon and Lord Mount Norris." During the Wilkes riots of 1768, the mob attacked Northumberland House, and would not withdraw until the Duke and Duchess appeared at a window, and drank two tankards of ale to the toast of "Wilkes and Liberty!" Nevertheless when, in 1770, Lord North advised the King to refuse the remonstrance of the London Corporation on the Westminster election, Northumberland was one of those that supported Chatham's resolution condemning such a course as unconstitutional and fraught with peril to the state.

Duchess Elizabeth died in London on the sixtieth anniversary of her birthday, December 5, 1776. In spite of a certain frank vulgarity peculiar to her generation, she appears to have been a woman of high spirit and considerable literary attainments. Her letters to Queen Charlotte, as well as to her husband and children, have none of the correctness and grace displayed in the epistles of her mother, the Duchess of Somerset, but they possess, on the other hand, both originality and humour, qualities wholly lacking in the stilted compositions of the elder lady. She had a pretty skill in *bouts rimés* and similar versification, of which a type survives in her well-known "Lines on a Buttered Muffin," written for the volume of society rhymes collected by her

friend Lady Miller at Batheaston.¹ Goldsmith was her favourite poet, and wrote, at her suggestion, his ballad of "Edwin and Angelina," afterwards published in "The Vicar of Wakefield" as "The Hermit." To Dr. Johnson she paid homage at a distance, and Boswell was for years one of her correspondents. Her death forms the subject of two poems, "The Teares of Alnwick, a Pastoral Elegy," by Henry Lucas, and "A Monody Sacred to the Memory of Elizabeth, Duchess of Northumberland, by Thomas Maurice."

In 1778 the Duke was appointed Master of the Horse, a selection which Walpole chuckles over as absurd, because Northumberland suffered from the stone and was very lame with gout. During the Gordon Riots he was freely accused by the mob of being a Roman Catholic, and the fact that his father, grandfather, and many other near relations had belonged to that faith, was made much of by the agitators. The windows of Northumberland House were broken by ardent Protestants; and a few days later the Duke's coach was stopped while conveying him to the House of Lords. The fact that "*a man in black*" sat by his side was quite sufficient for the zealots. A cry went up that the individual in sombre garb was a "Jesuit priest and the Duke's confessor."² On this the mob dragged Northumberland from the coach, and religiously robbed him of his watch and purse.³ What became of the unfortunate "man in black" is not stated.

After Pitt came into power, the Duke was created Baron Lovaine of Alnwick, with remainder to his second son Lord Algernon Percy. He continued to the last to exert himself towards the improvement of his estates, and the embellishment of his various houses. Through Goldsmith's introduction, he became the patron and fast friend of Thomas

¹ Lady Miller, wife of Sir John Miller, lived at a villa in Batheaston, near Bath, and was accustomed to hold "literary tournaments," where great dames vied with each other in the production of *bouts rimés* and the like. Walpole speaks of the Duchess of Northumberland having got "very jollily through her task"—*i.e.* the "Buttered Muffin" verses.

² Mahon; *Hist. of England*, vii. 28.

³ *Ibid.*

Percy,¹ afterwards Bishop of Dromore, the compiler of the "Reliques of English Poetry." Periodical attacks of gout greatly embittered his declining years, and he died of this disease on June 6, 1786, at Syon House. His remains were interred in St. Nicholas's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, beside those of Duchess Elizabeth.

¹ Thomas Percy was born on April 13, 1729, at Cartway Street, Bridgenorth. He was the son and grandson of grocers (*Bridgenorth Common Council Books*), but the tradition of his family was that it sprang from the House of Northumberland. This may have been so (and many years before Thomas Percy's birth, the "Trunkmaker" claimant had admitted that the Worcestershire Percies were descendants "of the second Earl"), but the pedigree lacks positive proof. In Nash's *Worcestershire*, Dr. Percy's line of descent is set forth from that John Percy of Newton (grandson of Sir Ralph Percy, "the Gledd of Dunstanburgh") whom we described as having sold his estates and left the North, *temp.* Henry VIII. John of Newton is supposed to have left a son, Thomas Percy of Worcester, whose son, James Percy, made his will October 20, 1574. Thomas, grandson of this James, was Mayor of Worcester in 1662; and the grandson of Thomas, Arthur Percy, settled at Bridgenorth as a grocer, and died 1771. His son, another Arthur Percy (1704-1764), was father of Bishop Thomas Percy, as well as of Arthur Percy of London, whose son Thomas (the Bishop's nephew) became editor of the *Reliques*.

Bishop Percy became M.A. of Oxford in 1753, took Holy Orders, and was given the college living of Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire. Here he resided for twenty-nine years. His literary labours began with miscellaneous works, chiefly upon China and the Chinese, his knowledge being, of course, obtained at second hand. The discovery of a seventeenth-century folio MS. containing old English poems, at the house of Humphrey Pitt of Shifnal, co. Salop, turned his thoughts in a new direction, and in 1765 he published the *Reliques*. Although Johnson, Warburton, and others sneered at the simplicity of the ancient ballads, the public hailed their revival with delight. Goldsmith introduced Percy to the Duke of Northumberland, who made him his chaplain. In 1768 Percy edited the *Household Booke* of the "Magnificent" Earl of Northumberland, and in 1771 published the *Hermit of Warkworth*. Chaplain to the King in 1769, he was made Dean of Carlisle in 1778, and Bishop of Dromore in 1782. His Irish diocese was remote, and, as time went on, he became more and more out of touch with the literary world. In 1804 his sight began to fail, and he was almost blind when he died on September 30, 1811. Dr. Percy was buried in the new transept which he had added to Dromore Cathedral. By his wife, Ann Gutteridge (whose family name he characteristically altered to "Goodryche"), he had two sons, who died young, and two daughters, of whom the elder, Barbara, married Ambrose Isted of Ecton, Northants, and the younger, Elizabeth, Archdeacon the Hon. Pierce Meade. Mrs. Percy was the heroine of the well-known lines to "Nancy," published by her husband in Dodsley's *Collection*, vol. vi. (1768). She was for some time nurse to Prince Edward, father of the late Queen Victoria. Bishop Percy's nephew, the Rev. Thomas Percy (1768-1808), was Vicar of Gray's Thurock, Essex, and edited the fourth edition of the *Reliques*.

The attacks made upon the first Duke of Northumberland by contemporary writers and politicians (more or less jealous of his extraordinary success) almost invariably took the form of vague innuendo and ill-natured depreciation. After weighing them carefully, we arrive at the conclusion that he was a man of great determination, sound common sense, and considerable, though somewhat flamboyant, taste. Perhaps the summary of his character given by Dutens is the fairest. "He had great talents," writes this author, "and more knowledge than is usually found among the nobility. . . . Although his expenditure was unexampled in his time, he was not generous, but passed for being so, owing to his judicious manner of bestowing favours."¹ By his Duchess, Northumberland left three children—(1) Hugh, who succeeded as second Duke; (2) Algernon, Lord Lovaine, and Earl of Beverley, ancestor of the present Duke; and (3) Lady Elizabeth Percy, who died unmarried.²

Hugh Percy, second Duke of Northumberland, was born August 28, 1742, and entered upon the profession of arms at an early age. He was still a mere boy, indeed, when he served as a volunteer under the Duke of Brunswick in the Seven Years' War. He took part in the disastrous battle of Bergen, and rode in Lord Granby's charge through the French lines at Minden.

¹ *Memoirs of a Traveller*, ii. 96-98.

² He also left two natural daughters, who were buried in Westminster Abbey, with his legitimate offspring, and a son, known first as James Lewis Mackie, and afterwards as James Smithson (1765-1829), the enlightened founder of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, U.S.A. This gentleman's mother was a relative of the Duchess of Northumberland, Elizabeth Hungerford Keate, great-grand-niece of Charles, "the Proud" Duke of Somerset. She was heir of the Hungerford family of Studley (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, article "Smithson, James"). Smithson became M.A. of Oxford in 1786, and devoted his life to scientific pursuits. By his will (1826) he bequeathed most of his estate for the establishment at Washington of an institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." In 1867 the value of this splendid gift was calculated as 650,000 dollars. The Smithsonian Institution was established by Act of Congress on August 10, 1846. James Smithson died at Genoa, June 27, 1829.

Young as he was, he compiled an interesting commentary on these campaigns, the "Pocket Book of Military Notes," preserved at Alnwick, and quoted by various writers. De Fonblanque states that "in 1762 he received his first commission."¹ This is an error, as on May 1, 1759 (while not yet seventeen), he had been already gazetted ensign in the 24th Foot, and had exchanged into the 85th with the rank of captain on August 6th of the same year. On April 16, 1762, he became lieutenant-colonel commanding the 11th Regiment, and a few months later captain and lieutenant-colonel in the Grenadier Guards, of which corps he was in 1764 (October 26) made colonel. His election as M.P. for Westminster, and subsequent contest for that seat with Wilkes's nominees, have been already referred to. His appointment to the command of the 5th Regiment of Foot in 1769 led to a very bitter letter by Junius;² but the choice proved in the long run well advised. Having married Lady Anne Stuart, daughter of Lord Bute, he was at first one of the so-called "King's Friends";³ but the outbreak of the American trouble and his inherited contempt for the war party soon drove him into opposition. Although bitterly opposed to the war, he held it to be his duty as a soldier to obey orders, and lead his regiment even in what he considered an unjust struggle. His father obtained leave of absence for him,⁴ but Percy ignored the indulgence, and set sail for Boston with his men early in 1774. General Gage placed him in command of Boston Camp, from whence he wrote to his father: "As I cannot say this is a business I very much admire, I hope it will not be my fate to be ordered up the country. Be that as it may, I will do my duty as long as I continue in the

¹ *Annals of the House of Percy*, vol. ii.

² Letter to Sir W. Draper, February 7, 1769.

³ Albemarle's *Rockingham*, i. 185.

⁴ At the same time the great Earl of Chatham commanded his elder son, then in Canada, to quit the army rather than serve against the Americans, and the Earl of Effingham, when ordered to the front, resigned command of his regiment "as a protest against the injustice of making war upon a People striving for their Rights."

service."¹ Nevertheless his known opinions caused him to be distrusted by the authorities, and he was repeatedly passed over. On April 19, 1775, after the Battle of Lexington, he left Boston in command of a brigade consisting of the Welsh Fusiliers and four other regiments, in order to cover the retreat to Charlestown of the army which had been hemmed in at Concord, and left without ammunition. While on this difficult service, he marched thirty miles in ten hours during the daytime, and was under an incessant fire for fifteen miles.²

He opposed the arbitrary conduct of some of the British generals, and drew upon himself the wrath of the belligerent party at home, while between Lord Howe and himself there sprang up a bitter feud. This was why he took no part in the fight at Bunker's Hill,³ when his regiment was "almost entirely cut to pieces." Howe complained of his behaviour to the authorities; but Gage still stood his friend. On July 11, 1775, he was given the local rank of major-general, and made major-general in the army on September 29. The following year saw him a lieutenant-general in the army, with local rank of general. On November 16, 1776, he commanded a division in the attack upon Fort Washington, and was the first to enter the enemy's lines. But the quarrels between Lord Howe and himself became more violent, and his hatred of the war more intense. At length, in 1777, he asked for and obtained his recall. "Lord Percy," wrote Horace Walpole, "has come home disgusted with Howe."⁴ His regiment parted with him regretfully, as did all the troops then at Boston. With the common soldiers his popularity was unbounded, for not only had he abolished corporal punishment among his men, but the widows of all those killed in battle were sent home at his expense, and given sums of money to keep them from want. His regiment solicited, and eventually received permission to call themselves "the Northumberland Fusiliers" in his honour, and this although

¹ *Alnwick MSS.*, quoted by De Fonblanque.

² Bancroft; iv. 538-9.

³ *Dict. of Nat. Biography.*

⁴ *Correspondence*, vi. 445-6.

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submitted to a serious rebuff at his hands. On June 10, 1803, the Prince wrote from Brighton asking that his "young friend Tom Sheridan" should be nominated by the Duke for one of his vacant boroughs.¹ Northumberland replied that he could not grant the request, as Lord Percy would soon be of age, and the vacant boroughs should be kept open for his selection.² But the "first gentleman in Europe" was not to be put out of countenance by this snub. Soon afterwards he offered Northumberland the Wardenship of the Stannaries, an honour which the Duke declined. As the Duke grew older, frequent attacks of gout spoilt his temper, and it required all the diplomacy of Fox and his party to keep him satisfied with the Whig policy. He was very jealous of his influence in the party, and insisted upon being consulted in all important matters. When Pitt died in 1806, and the "Ministry of all the Talents" came into power, there had been no time to confer with Northumberland, then ill at Alnwick. The Duke was furious with Fox and Grenville, the chiefs of the new Government, for this seeming neglect, and went so far as to send a circular to all the members for boroughs under his control, ordering them in the loftiest terms not to vote or even take part in debates, "*until I am able to judge of the principles upon which this new coalition intend to govern the country.*"³ He accused Fox of "ingratitude and duplicity," and would not be placated although the minister wrote a letter of justification, pointing out the haste with which the new Cabinet was formed, and the distance of Alnwick from London. Something resembling a reconciliation was brought about by the Prince Regent; but the Duke and Fox were hardly friends when the latter died, a few months later. Northumberland's political power increased under Grenville. In 1807 Sir William Gordon informed him that Lord Camden had written in the following terms: "You may certainly feel yourself authorised to assure the Duke of Northumberland

¹ *Alnwick MSS.* (quoted by De Fonblanque, and *Dict. of Nat. Biography*).

² *Ibid.* Lord Percy did not enter Parliament until three years later.

³ Several copies of this autocratic document still exist, one of them in the *Alnwick MSS.*

that, in the event of his Grace having any disposition to confer with the Ministry upon public business, the Duke of Portland or the Lord Chancellor will certainly wait upon him to discuss every measure of importance previous to its adoption."¹ For his elder son he was offered a peerage, and when Lord Percy chose to enter the House of Commons, Grenville placed at his disposal the borough of Buckingham, for which he might be returned "*without the trouble of personal attendance.*" The Duke himself was, at the same time, offered the command of the Blues.

Northumberland followed the traditions of his father in regard to the estates, and was, upon the whole, an excellent landlord. When prices fell after the Peace, he reduced his rents by twenty-five per cent., in recognition of which generosity his northern tenants erected a memorial column at Alnwick in 1816. Great feasts were given by him at Alnwick twice a week, to which, we are told, "local farmers and tradespeople were frequently invited." The second Duke died on July 10, 1817, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Walpole describes him as "totally devoid of ostentation, most simple and retiring in his habits." In early life he had shown himself a gallant and skilful soldier; and he preserved to the last the character of an honourable gentleman, patriotic according to his lights, choleric in old age because of the malady from which he suffered, and respected as much by his opponents as by his friends. He was succeeded by his eldest son.

Hugh, third Duke of Northumberland, was born April 20, 1785. He studied at Cambridge, becoming M.A. of St.

The third
and fourth
Dukes: the
latter a
distinguished
scientist.

John's College in 1805, and an LL.D. in 1809. The enormous political influence of his family prior to the Reform Bill made his return to Parliament a mere matter of the choice of seats. On August 1, 1806, he was returned as a Tory for the borough of Buckingham, and on October 7 of the same year for Westminster. In May 1807 he was elected

¹ *Alnwick MSS.* (quoted by De Fonblanque).

M.P. for the county of Northumberland, and also for Lancashire. His active parliamentary career began early, for on March 17, 1807, as the spokesman of the anti-slave-trade, he brought in a bill for the abolition of slavery in the British Colonies. On March 12, 1812, he was summoned to the House of Lords as Baron Percy; and on July 10, 1817, he succeeded to the Dukedom. The Garter was conferred upon him two years later;¹ and at the splendid coronation of George IV. he carried the second sword. His great wealth enabled him, when sent to Paris in 1825 as ambassador extraordinary and representative of the King at the coronation of Charles X., to pay the entire cost of the expedition out of his own pocket. On his return he was presented with a diamond-hilted sword, and sworn a member of the Privy Council.²

In politics the third Duke was a Tory of very moderate views. He accepted the Viceroyalty of Ireland in 1829, at the hands of the Duke of Wellington, on the distinct understanding, however, that his term of government should not exceed eighteen months. Great surprise was expressed at his taking office at all, for it was supposed that he objected to Catholic Emancipation, and he had offended the King in 1825 by withholding his proxy from the first Catholic Relief Bill. He now declared that he would welcome Emancipation, if the measure were introduced by "responsible persons" such as Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. The news that he had proposed to reduce his salary as Lord-Lieutenant by one-half led to some rather ill-natured comments, Greville setting it down as "a piece of vulgar ostentation intended to show off his wealth." On the whole his administration seems to have been a useful one. He laboured assiduously to promote the peace of Ireland; and impressed upon the judges the injustice of administering the law in the interests of any particular creed or class.³ In April 1830 he issued

¹ November 25, 1819.

² On March 23, 1825.

³ Northumberland was especially bitter against "manufactured outrages." In 1830 George IV. (through the influence of his Secretary, MacMahon) asked the Duke to reprieve a Clare gentleman named Comyn, who had been convicted of



Hugh, 3rd Duke of Northumberland.



a proclamation suppressing the Catholic Association ; but that body, having accomplished its allotted task, had already dissolved itself. The Tory Government collapsed in November 1830, in consequence of the widespread demand for Parliamentary reform ; and Northumberland returned to England. After this he lived a rather retired life, mostly at Alnwick ; and although he naturally opposed so crushing a blow to his interests as the Reform Bill, we do not find him taking any active part in the debates upon that great measure. He became High Steward of Cambridge University in 1834, and Chancellor in 1840. On February 12, 1847, he was found dead in his bed at Alnwick Castle.

The Duke is characterised by Greville as "a very good sort of man, with a very narrow understanding ; an eternal talker, and a prodigious bore." There is no doubt but that this description was greatly exaggerated. In his Irish administration, at least, Northumberland was far from displaying a "narrow understanding." Although he lived in the North, and expended large sums there, he was not popular among his northern tenantry, chiefly because of his encroachments on common rights, and the exclusion of Alnwick from the Corporation Act through his influence. On April 29, 1817, he married Lady Charlotte Florentina Clive, daughter of Edward, first Earl of Powis, and granddaughter of the famous Lord Clive. She had been for some time governess to the Princess, afterwards Queen Victoria, and was, according to Greville, "sensible, amiable, and good-humoured, ruling her husband in all things."¹ The couple left no children ; and the Duke was succeeded by his next surviving brother, Algernon, Lord Prudhoe.

The fourth Duke, born Lord Algernon Percy on December 15, 1792, entered the navy as a midshipman in May 1805, and became lieutenant in 1811. He took part, under Lord Exmouth, in the engagement off Toulon and setting fire to his own house. Northumberland was with great difficulty induced to consent ; but he took occasion to complain to Sir Robert Peel of the favouritism too often shown in the administration of Irish affairs.

¹ She survived until July 27, 1866.

fifth Lord Wharnecliffe, and granddaughter of the Prime Minister, Lord Bute.¹ At his death, which occurred on August 21, 1867, he left issue three sons and two daughters. Of the sons the eldest was Algernon George, the late Duke; the second, Lord Josceline William Percy, born 1811, died 1885;² and the third, Lord Henry Hugh Manners Percy, V.C. The last-named gallant soldier deserves a notice more extended than can here be accorded to him. Born on August 22, 1817, he became captain and lieutenant-colonel of the Grenadier Guards. In this capacity he fought with distinguished gallantry throughout the Crimean War, taking part in the battles of the Alma (where he was wounded), Balaclava, Inkerman (again wounded), and Sebastopol. At Inkerman, on November 5, 1854, he won the proudest distinction of the British soldier, the Victoria Cross. Finding that, like a true descendant of Hotspur, he had charged too far, and that many other officers and men of different regiments were in the same predicament, he set himself to save the situation, and, if possible, the lives of those thus cut off from their friends. By dint of extraordinary exertions he succeeded in collecting the bewildered remnants of the charge, and placing himself at their head. Their last round of ammunition had been fired, and they were almost surrounded by the enemy. Percy had been badly wounded, but he held his force well in hand, and led them under a heavy fire back to the British lines. In this desperate march, his knowledge of the ground stood him in good stead, and fifty lives were saved by his instrumentality. The exploit brought him the Victoria Cross, which the late Queen pinned on his breast, May 5, 1857. From 1855 to 1865 he was aide-de-camp to her Majesty, and in 1861, during the complication with the United States (happily averted by the good sense of Lincoln) he was sent to New Bruns-

¹ This lady was consequently niece of the divorced wife of the second Duke of Northumberland. She died in 1848.

² His son, George Algernon Percy, born 1849, is now captain and lieutenant-colonel of the Grenadier Guards.





wick in command of his Grenadiers. He retired from active service in 1862, and died on December 3, 1877, having attained the rank of lieutenant-general. For his Crimean services he had been honoured by France and Turkey, with the Cross of the Legion of Honour and the Order of the Mejidie respectively. Lord Henry Percy never married. His sister, Lady Margaret, married Edward Richard Littleton, second Lord Hatherton. Another sister, Lady Louisa, died unmarried in 1883, aged eighty-one years.

Algernon George Percy, sixth Duke of Northumberland, was born May 2, 1810. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge, and served for some time in the Grenadier Guards. He represented Beeralston in Parliament from 1831-2, and North Northumberland from 1852-65, becoming a Lord of the Admiralty in 1858, and Vice-President of the Board of Trade in 1859. From 1878-80 he was Lord Privy Seal in the last administration of Lord Beaconsfield. Among other offices held by the Duke were those of Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland, Chairman of Quarter Sessions for Surrey, and Hon. Colonel of the Northumberland Militia. In 1842 St. John's College, Cambridge, conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. He married, in 1845, Louisa, daughter and heir of Henry Drummond, Esq., M.P., of Albury Park, Surrey, and left issue two sons, Henry George, seventh and present Duke, and Lord Algernon Malcolm Arthur Percy of Guyscliffe, co. Warwick, M.P. for Westminster (1882-5) and for St. George's, London (1885-7), sometime Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, and Hon. Colonel 3rd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. The sixth Duke died on January 2, 1899.

Henry George Percy, seventh Duke of Northumberland, K.G., P.C., was born on May 29, 1846; represented North Northumberland in Parliament (1868-85), served as Treasurer in the Household of the late Queen; and is Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland and Hon. Colonel of the Northumberland Militia. He married, on December

23, 1868, Lady Edith Campbell, daughter of the late George Douglas, Duke of Argyll, and has issue five sons and as many daughters. His eldest son, Henry Algernon George, Earl Percy, has been Member of Parliament for South Kensington since 1895, and is best known by his two books descriptive of travels in Asia Minor.

Here we will leave the History of the Great House of Percy. The fresh and fruitful branch engrafted upon the parent tree has thriven broadly and well; the proud old sap mingles freely with the new: stock and scion have united their finest qualities, and are as one. The Percy stem, unlike that of Douglas, put forth few offshoots, and afforded no nourishment to parasitic growths. The pine indeed might serve as its emblem rather than the oak. Yet it seems difficult of belief that a race so ancient should have left no male heirs; and such heirs may yet be found labouring humbly upon some stony Irish hillside, or sharing in the strenuous life of the great American Republic. In their absence the honours of Percy are worthily borne by the inheritors of the Percy estates, through whose veins the blood of Hotspur courses yet, and to whom England looks with honest pride, as the representatives of a splendid and stainless name.)

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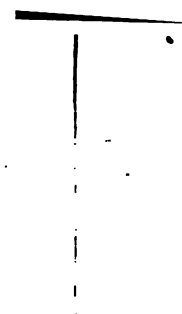
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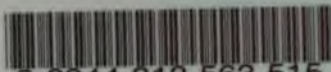
ERRATA—VOLUME II.

- Page 53, line 17, for "Strype," read "Aylmer."
- " 97, " 24, for "Tarporley," read "Torperley."
- " 155, " 19, for "Sir William Cecil," read "Sir Robert Cecil."
- " 215, " 24, for "Henry," read "Thomas."
- " 271, note 3, for "Goudi," read "Gondi."
- " 457, line 19, for "the then Earl Percy," read "Northumberland."
- " 457, note 1, for "Countess Percy," read "the Duchess."
- " 460, lines 3-4, after "anti-slave trade," *understand* "party."



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